

**Finding the Unique Balance: Local Government Representation on the Boards of
Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs)**

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2018

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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Finding the Unique Balance: Local Government Representation on the Boards of Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs)

James Arthur Rickabaugh, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2018

Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs) are coalitions consisting primarily of municipal and county governments who develop a broad array of regional plans and policies; they also allocate federal and state funding to projects including transportation, community development, and economic development. Decisions about these policies and allocations are made by the RIGO board. This dissertation demonstrates the variety of different governance structures in place in RIGOs across the United States and introduces methods to quantify local government representational rights on RIGO boards. While much of the literature has previously described these boards as being overwhelmingly “one member, one vote”, coding and analyzing the original governance documents shows that most RIGO collective choice arrangements balance institutional membership and population proportionality in complicated and thoughtful ways. The dissertation develops a typology of membership that reflects the various ways in which counties and municipalities can be members, including through multijurisdictional membership processes. Two formulas that reflect the institutional membership and population proportionality are introduced to quantify the extent to which each board is “one member, one vote” and “one person, one vote.” The balances agreed to by local governments often more closely resemble how international organizations agree upon representational rights than they do the US House or the US Senate. These formulas are further applied to two RIGOs to show their use comparing governance proposals and to show changes in collective choice arrangements over time.

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1.0 Introduction

This dissertation demonstrates that the representational rights of local governments within Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs) are a complex balance of myriad factors, including population disparities among members and the varying roles of municipalities and counties. Both Bryan and Wolf (2009) and Miller, Nelles, Dougherty & Rickabaugh (2018) have acknowledged that the role of voluntary associations of local governments like Councils of Governments, Regional Councils, Regional Planning Commissions, and Area Development Districts are overlooked in the regional governance literature, including their collective choice arrangements. Much of the work that investigated these organizations from a wider scope is now more than twenty years old (Dodge, 1996; Mogulof, 1971; Wikstrom, 1977). More recent work has focused quite heavily on case studies or within a narrowed geographic scope (J. L. Hall, 2008; Kwon & Park, 2014; Lindstrom, 2010; Luna, 2015; Teitz & Barbour, 2007; Visser, 2004). The result is a piecemeal understanding of these organizations, lacking underlying conceptual structure and empirical breadth. With this limited scholarship, the possibility is strong that outdated or inaccurate information perpetuates unchallenged into conventional wisdom. One such example of this conventional wisdom is that these organizations are overwhelmingly governed in a one-member, one-vote structure (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; J. S. Hall, 2009; Kramer & Bond, 2010; Teitz & Barbour, 2007; Wikstrom, 1977; Wyman, 1994). This research may have been accurate at the time and the institutions have evolved since, the survey methods did not adequately account for the specifics of a local government's representational rights, or other limitations. The purported consequence is that the center cities are at a disadvantage under this governance model (Benjamin, Kincaid, &

McDowell, 1994; Frisken & Norris, 2001; P G Lewis, 1998; Sanchez, 2006). John Stuart Hall typifies the consequences of this when he writes:

“[Councils of Governments] with rules like ‘one jurisdiction, one vote’ are perfect examples of the structural problem facing regions. Despite the fact that these organizations come closest to being a region-wide policy voice, they often must avoid the most pressing problems of the region, particularly those that are most severe for central cities.” (Hall 2009, pg. 71)

This dissertation updates and tests that conventional wisdom using Miller & Nelles’s national database (2018)¹ of Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs); the results presented here show this conventional wisdom needs to be updated. Contrary to conventional academic opinion, RIGO boards are structured in highly diverse ways that correspond to the political structures in place and differences in population; the governance documents are intentionally crafted through negotiations and evolve as regions do.

If jurisdictions are given an equal number of votes, as Hall and others have suggested, this implies that counties and municipalities are treated the same both between and amongst one another. Membership associations function, at least in part, to best serve the members. The resources, powers, and responsibilities can vary greatly between one organization’s counties and municipalities, between its large counties and small counties, and between its center cities and suburbs. It would follow then that these local governments would have varying needs for regional governance. This variation is then amplified from a national perspective of hundreds of such organizations. It seems implausible these organizations would follow one model for governance, and that its impacts are uniform. Demonstrating this variation is a preliminary step

¹ <http://rigos.pitt.edu/data-resources>

to understanding the impacts these organizations can have on both a region's growth and its equity among local governments.

With this background, I provide here some nominal definitions of the concepts explored throughout the dissertation². Members are defined as the local governments (counties, municipalities, and townships) entitled to voting privileges in any chamber under the provisions of the governance documents³. Representatives are the elected officials, professional staff, locally appointed citizens, or others seated and voting on behalf of their local government member in any chamber. Votes are the value of each representative in the collective decision-making process provided by the governance documents in any chamber or under any set of rules. Representational rights are the aggregation of provisions for each local government member's representatives and votes (within a chamber or in total). Collective choice arrangements are the aggregation of all member governments' representational rights (within a chamber or in total).

This is not to suggest that political structures and population are the only two reasons board structures vary, just that they explain a substantial portion of the variation. Some states' legislation mandates the membership, representation and voting of RIGOs; this is still the result of negotiations and capable of evolving as the regions do, but involves different stakeholders than the local governments themselves. The portfolio of policies a RIGO undertakes and who is permitted or chooses to participate in decisions regarding those policies would be another factor

² These definitions are explored more deeply in the literature in Chapter 2, and operationalized in Chapter 3.

³ Federal/State/Native American governments, special and school districts, civic and private sector organizations and at-large citizens may be entitled to voting privileges within a RIGO but fall out of the purview of this research. For more information see Dougherty & Miller in Miller, Nelles, Dougherty, & Rickabaugh (2018).

that would likely affect the way governance is structured. Furthermore, we know that the region's history, culture, and the worldview of the actors present affects how these negotiations may occur (Skuzinski, 2015). This introductory chapter introduces readers to the concept of RIGOs, the importance of the "one-member, one-vote" question, and the ways in which it will be explored in the later chapters of the dissertation.

1.1 What is a RIGO?

Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs) are one class of a larger typology of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations that meet five distinct criteria that help researchers organize the dynamic and diverse world of regional governance. Miller and Nelles (2018) distinguish RIGOs from other organizations by identifying bodies that have: (1) general-purpose local governments (GPLGs) as the majority of their members, (2) a broad policy agenda, (3) the ambition to be the organizational voice of local government for the region, (4) legitimacy granted by federal and state agencies, and (5) the broadest geographic scope of any organization within the geographic footprint. As a result of these criteria, the cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations identified as RIGOs are the single organization in its region that is the most representative, most robust and most nimble. RIGOs include many members of both the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). In some cases, these are state-designated bodies; Kentucky's Area Development Districts and Virginia's Planning District Commissions are two such examples. In other cases, RIGOs are more self-organized as the result of enabling legislation, incentives, and/or conditions of federal and state funding; organizations founded as

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Economic Development Districts (EDDs) also have expanded their mission over time as regional needs have evolved.

In a neoliberal economic environment for local governments and regions, RIGOs are one forum in which “growth machine” coalitions (Logan & Molotch, 2007) can manifest. Pro-development interest groups have the upper hand in local politics because they receive concentrated benefits and are better organized than diffuse public interest (Lubell, Feiock, & Ramirez De La Cruz, 2009). In federally-designated forums like MPOs and EDDs with a focus on development and public infrastructure, where local governments retain the bulk of board membership, it follows that these growth-focused decision-making patterns could continue. In many cases, RIGOs also provide voting or non-voting membership to chambers of commerce or other private sector interests (Dougherty & Miller in Miller & Nelles, 2018). But, this relationship between local governments and business interests was present before the formation of RIGOs, as well.

The initial decline of center city business districts in the Northeast and Rust Belt in the early 20th century brought together local elected officials and private sector interests as residential and retail decentralization to the suburbs reduced city tax bases (Teaford, 1990). These concerns led a few cities to the first failed efforts to create a more “logical” metropolitan government (Glass, 2011; Teaford, 2016). These coalitions supported initiatives such as improving highway access to downtowns that often had the unintended consequence of accelerating decentralization and expanding blight in major center cities (DiMento & Ellis, 2013). In many regions, this geographic diffusion of both residential population and employment centers meant an increase in municipal incorporations and suburban infrastructure needs often spanning into new counties (and occasionally, across state lines) that reified inequities between

the city and suburbs, but also created and reinforced inequities amongst the suburbs themselves (Hanlon, Vicino, & Short, 2006; Schafran, 2013; Teaford, 2008). As this decentralization occurred, municipal chambers of commerce evolved from only advocating locally to becoming nested within a more regional or metropolitan perspective. These nested relationships may be competitive or acrimonious, nevertheless they collectively recognize some benefits to the economies of scale from coordination at this scale.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many local governments also began to organize and coordinate at regional levels, creating what we know today as RIGOs. Most often these organizations are a voluntary association of local governments dedicated to planning and economic development, rather than metropolitan government. In some cases, this was the result of prescriptive state legislation or gubernatorial executive orders that drew the boundaries and specified their functions (and may or may not have prescribed collective choice arrangements). In other cases, the state enacted enabling legislation. Then, in response to state or federal incentives, local governments formed organizations through self-created arrangements (see Miller in Miller, Nelles, Dougherty & Rickabaugh [2018] for a deeper discussion of clustered vs. coordinated states). The federal government and states often use RIGOs as a central point to house, coordinate, or function as the federally recognized Economic Development Districts, Workforce Investment Boards, Metropolitan or Rural Transportation Planning Organizations, and a wide variety of state functions. This gives the local government members distinct policy levers to affect a region's economic competitiveness and support business interests, but still retains the autonomy of local governments (Pincetl, 1994) and provides some administrative coordination for higher levels of government. Some normative scholarship has suggested that these regional organizations need more authority to overcome the drawbacks of fragmentation and competition

among local governments within the region (Orfield & Dawes, 2016; Orfield & Luce, 2012). I discuss the distinctions between statutory authority and collective choice arrangements in Chapter 2 and return to the normative scholarship on the statutory authority of RIGOs in Chapter 6. For this dissertation, I focus on the empirics of collective choice arrangements as a component of how decisions are made, not what decisions can be made.

In many cases, RIGOs also function as a substate district for administrative ease and efficiency to tackle issues of equity and quality of life for vulnerable populations, in ways entirely distinct from its agenda for economic development and infrastructure planning. RIGOs are often the federally-designated Area Agency on Aging that provides social services to senior citizens or coordinate services for area veterans through their local VA hospital. Some RIGOs have started addressing food deserts and homelessness. RIGOs may also be mandated by the federal government or their respective state to improve air and water quality within their region; other RIGOs have tackled climate resilience planning⁴. Many of these functions were not the primary or original purpose of the formation of the RIGO. More research is needed to determine which of these initiatives were directed by the local government members, the civic or private sector, or grafted on to the mission by higher levels of government.

RIGOs occupy a unique space in the American governance landscape. RIGOs may function partly as administrative arms of their respective states and meet federal requirements for certain program designations, but must still remain responsive to the initiatives of their local government board members. RIGOs are a key stakeholder on decisions that affect the region's

⁴ These efforts may or may not correspond to the “greening of the growth machine” (While, Jonas, & Gibbs, 2004), but are classified here to reflect that they are, at minimum, not traditional growth machine agenda items.

business sector while also crucial to the welfare of some vulnerable populations and the protection of natural resources. The RIGO is both charged with thinking holistically about the region, but still faces internal competition among local governments for economic advantages. Conceptualizing and measuring the collective choice arrangements is a necessary step to understanding these regional-local dynamics and the decisions RIGOs make on these issues.

RIGOs, as a class of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations, provide a useful population to then empirically evaluate the structure of collective choice arrangements of general-purpose local governments. RIGOs are ubiquitous throughout the United States and cover urban, suburban, and rural areas to varying degrees within each. Figure 1 shows their presence throughout the United States.

RIGOs were formed both by state mandate and through local initiative. The regions themselves have changed demographically, politically, and culturally over time. Given all of this variation on the components of a region, it seems implausible RIGOs would rely so heavily on one model for governance.

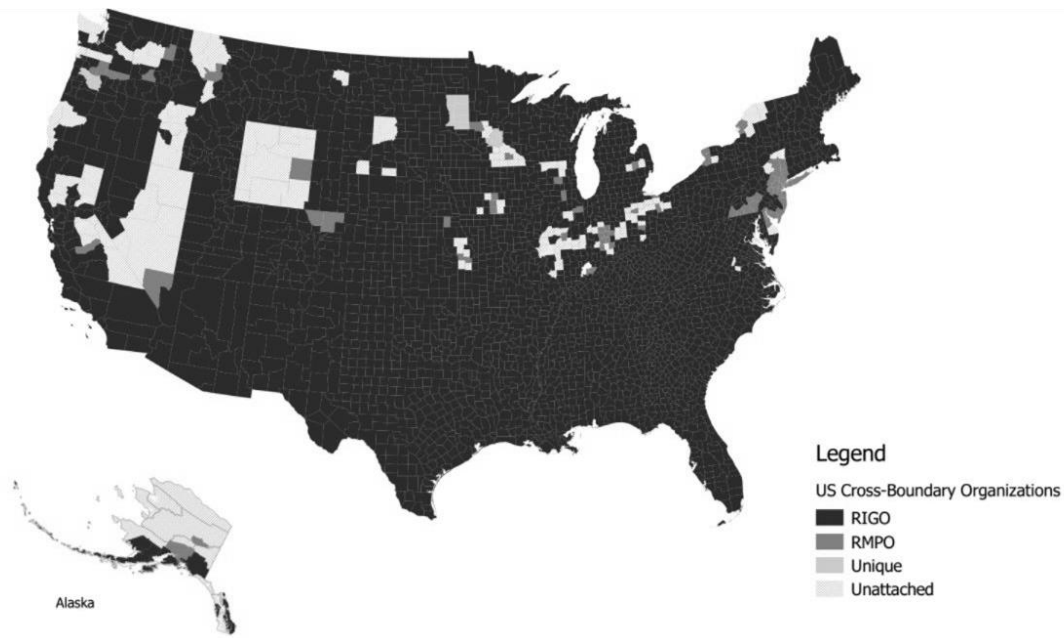


Figure 1 Map of United States Showing RIGOs, RMPOs, and UROs⁵

1.2 The One-Member, One-Vote Conventional Wisdom

The scholarship on the governance of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations like RIGOs has frequently mischaracterized the ways in which they structure their collective choice arrangements. These misinterpretations seem to result from strong concerns about the lack of population proportionality affecting center cities, a lack of clear definition in what constitutes a “member”, and methodological flaws in gathering the information about how these

⁵ Map by Jen Nelles, from www.rigos.pitt.edu. Honolulu County (HI, not pictured) currently is classified as an RMPO. The remainder of Hawai’i is unattached.

boards are structured. As a result, this idea of a “one-member, one-vote” board structure has perpetuated itself. These ideas will be expanded on in Chapter 2; however, I include a brief overview here because of its centrality to the thesis of the dissertation.

1.2.1 Differing Normative Views on RIGOs

In light of failed attempts to bring about metropolitan government and the focus on the impacts of suburbanization on center cities, much of the literature evaluating intergovernmental cross-boundary organizations focuses on urban governments. This framing compares these organizations to governments; in this case, local governments that rely on a one-person, one-vote representation model. Further, the existing frame presents the argument as a city-suburb or city-country dichotomy that has its own pitfalls and normative implications that implies rural economies lack industry or urban areas lack natural resources worthy of protection (Wachsmuth, 2013). The normative arguments about how these organizations ought to structure their representation may still have merit and value; however, they are premised on flawed conventional wisdom. This dissertation presents a more complete empirical picture of collective choice arrangements to better inform this discussion.

Two metropolitan areas have dominated the discussion on regional government and governance: Portland (OR) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN), often dismissing the hundreds of regional efforts present throughout the rest of the country (Katz, 2000; Orfield & Dawes, 2016; Rusk, 2013). In a continuum of regional organizations from purely private sector (like a

metropolitan chamber of commerce) to purely public sector⁶, most would consider these two organizations the most purely public sector. These two institutions seat representatives from equal-population districts that cut across municipal boundaries⁷, which are fundamentally different collective choice arrangements than associations of local governments like RIGOs. These are certainly innovative, unique organizations; the studies of the outcomes on their regions have been identified (Orfield & Luce, 2012). However because of their implementation, disaggregating the impact of the governance of Portland Metro and Twin Cities' Met Council from the impact of the broader statutory authority of these organizations is impossible. Whether regions across the United States ought to adopt this model is a normative question; further evaluation of these two organizations does not help answer the empirical questions about how the remaining regions operate.

Unlike Metro and Met Council, RIGOs (and most other cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations) are membership organizations. The prior empirical research determined that the dominant form is “one-member, one-vote”, leaving center cities under-represented relative to their population (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Benjamin et al., 1994; Kramer & Bond, 2010; Hall, 2009; Teitz & Barbour, 2007; Wikstrom, 1977; Wyman, 1994). If it can be demonstrated that there is substantial variation in the representational rights of local governments, normative and empirical scholarship must account for this diversity in how we understand the policy areas RIGOs choose to undertake and

⁶ Certainly there are examples of institutions where the civic sector takes the lead on regional governance initiatives. One such present-day example would be the West Central Initiative based in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

⁷ Portland Metro does this by election; Twin Cities' Met Council does this by appointment of the Minnesota Governor.

their effectiveness in doing so. This variation is also a key to disaggregating the effects of governance and statutory authority on regional outcomes that we cannot currently do with Metro and Met Council.

RIGOs often function across sectors, leading to an entirely different normative perspective of how they should operate. By definition, RIGOs must be constituted by a majority of general-purpose local governments. However, one key distinction often ignored by the literature is that representation in a RIGO is not limited to local governments, moving these organizations away from the terminus on a public-private sector spectrum. These bodies may include representatives from business interests, minority communities, and major non-profit institutions like universities or foundations. As a result, RIGOs operate a more multi-sectoral network of governance than Metro and Met Council. This model of collaboration aligns more closely with an entirely different (though not necessarily contradictory) strain of normative scholarship on how local governments ought to function in modern society as part of a regional, multi-sectoral network (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Innes, Booher, & Di Vittorio, 2010). The research on the role of civic and private sector stakeholders on RIGO boards is promising, but in its early stages (Dougherty & Miller in Miller & Nelles, 2018). This dissertation is limited to the representational rights of local governments, but acknowledges that additional research into civic and private sector actors on RIGO boards adds crucial context to an understanding of collective choice arrangements.

1.2.2 Using International Organizations Literature to Improve Empirical Methods

Neither of these normative views is sufficient for understanding the empirics of RIGO governance, so a new analytical lens is needed. Rather than compare RIGOs to government, I

propose comparing RIGOs to International Organizations (IOs) like the European Union or UN Security Council. A limited set of literature has hinted at these ideas (Ensch, 2008; Frug & Barron, 2013); I make these ties both explicit and empirical. Like RIGOs, International Organizations are also often voluntary membership organizations with a focus on economic growth (usually through trade or security). In both RIGOs and IOs, the collective members represent a principal in a principal-agent relationship to the organization's staff that then implements the board's will; this is in contrast to interlocal agreements or treaties that are enforced by the members themselves (Feiock, 2009). Municipalities may sign interlocal agreements to allow their citizens to borrow from either library, but this is distinct from an interlocal agreement creating a joint library board to which the library staff reports. Similarly, nations may sign bi-lateral or multi-lateral treaties on trade, but these treaties would be distinct from forming (or joining) an independently-staffed international organization like the World Trade Organization. This principal-agent relationship is a crucial distinction from internally administered agreements because this staff is now responsible to the collective whole. Both organizations also require that smaller players retain a sufficient enough collective veto such that the decisions reflect the region, rather than just the dominant players (Kirsch & Langner, 2011; Taagepera & Hosli, 2006).

Rather than only focusing on the under-representation of center cities, IO scholarship analyzes all members as equal units of analysis. This allows for a view of regional collective choice arrangements that is blind to a local government's status as a center city, edge city (Garreau, 1992), first-ring suburb, exurb, or the other classifications of urban form. This approach recognizes both the economic power and centrality of the larger cities and that the smaller and interstitial spaces often identify more regionally than their more urban counterparts

(Young & Keil, 2014). IO scholars spend relatively little time worrying about the under-representation of Germany in the EU proportional to its population and economic power. This scholarship also recognizes the importance of the autonomy of smaller states in the EU to the sustainability of the organization (Taagepera & Hosli, 2006). Using this more member-neutral, empirical framework does not reify the city-country dichotomy (Wachsmuth, 2013) and does not classify suburbs as a homogeneous group (Hanlon et al., 2006; Teafor, 2008). I return to the under-representation of large cities to contrast my empirical findings with the prior conceptions of them to show how the results differ with a new lens.

1.2.3 Definitional and Methodological Limitations in Prior Research

The research that underlies the “one-member, one-vote” conventional wisdom in cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations has three substantial limitations. First, using a survey question or imputing governance from a roster is a shallow proxy for identifying how governance actually occurs. Second, the conceptualization of membership in prior research is particularly problematic given the nested nature of municipalities and counties in most American states. Third, a “one-member, one-vote” model is not necessarily mutually exclusive with population proportionality. My methods for remedying these limitations are briefly outlined at the end of this section, but are expanded upon in Chapter 3.

The initial research on board structures used surveys and imputed from rosters, but using these methods lacks nuance. Surveys used by Wyman (1994) and ACIR (1973) gave a very limited set of nominal characteristics for executive directors to describe their board structures. The ACIR gave regional council directors four options to describe their boards: equal (“one-member, one-vote”), proportionate population, combination, or other and give this option for

both their general assembly and their executive committee (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973, pg. 82). In 1994, MPOs were assessed by surveys with a specific focus on the representation of center cities relative to their population (Benjamin et al., 1994). More granular information was sought out in some cases limiting the population of MPOs to a particular state or the largest regions by population (Lewis & Sprague, 1997; Sanchez, 2006). However, there is no complete registry for the voting structures of MPOs (along with RIGOs and other cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations) (Nelson, Sanchez, Wolf, & Farquhar, 2003).

Second, knowing if a RIGO (or other cross-boundary intergovernmental organization) provides equal or proportional voting to members is only useful when we know how membership is operationalized. Most states' municipalities are nested within counties, thus membership can be more complicated than in international organizations like the UN or EU. When a RIGO only provides membership to the counties (as in the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission), it becomes much more challenging to disaggregate the representation of a center city on the board. In some cases (as under Indiana state law), RIGOs may provide membership to some municipalities in their region, but not all. RIGOs may also create multi-jurisdictional memberships to create population balances, as is the case for two counties in the St. Louis RIGO (East-West Gateway Council of Governments) that share one vote. "One member, one vote" is meaningful only when we know the units of membership are consistent both within and across organizations. My research shows that the empirical reality is far more complicated than this.

Third, to say an organization has a "one-member, one-vote" model does not automatically equate to a population disproportional result. In its simplest form, a four-county RIGO where each county has 50,000 residents can develop a "one-member, one-vote" structure

that is entirely population proportional. The above examples show how multi-jurisdictional members and the selective inclusion of municipalities can lead to more population proportional governance models that retain equal votes among its members (however they have chosen to define membership).

I remedy many of these methodological shortcomings by using the current governance documents of the RIGOs, treating the member as the unit of analysis, and generating a random national sample. By using the charters, bylaws, joint powers agreements, state statutes and other relevant original documentation of the RIGO, I am coding the most granular and valid information possible. Rather than categorizing the RIGO under broad umbrella terms like “population proportional” or “one-member, one-vote”, I code each member individually as defined within those original governance documents and aggregate those findings using cluster analysis to compare across RIGOs. Finally, by generating a random national sample, I collect information that more accurately represents the entire landscape of RIGOs rather than a focus on just those with major cities.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is presented in six chapters. In Chapter 2, I argue that the international organizations literature provides a compelling perspective that can assist scholars of RIGOs and other cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations in more rigorous modeling of governance and introducing new research questions to better understand these institutions’ functions. While some literature has evaluated how cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations govern

themselves it has largely focused on the under-representation of the center city, rather than a more holistic view of the organization.

The third chapter outlines my methods for evaluating the membership, representation, and voting of local governments on RIGO boards. In this chapter, I introduce a typology of membership that accounts for the nested nature of municipalities within counties. I also describe the random sampling method and coding scheme used to differentiate who is permitted to represent local governments on RIGO boards (elected officials, appointed officials, citizens, etc.). These coding schemes are used consistently throughout Chapters 4 and 5.

In Chapter 4, I present the quantitative findings of my research. Here I introduce the key contributions of my dissertation: a measurement for the amount of seats allocated based on institutional membership (how close a RIGO is to “one-member, one-vote”) and modify an existing formula to reflect population proportionality, and demonstrate their value together. The substantial variation in RIGO governance is demonstrated by a scatterplot that contrasts the institutional membership and population proportionality across the entire random sample. This scatterplot is then compared only to the RIGOs in the random sample with large cities (population greater than 200,000). Relatively few RIGOs with large cities in the random sample have a high institutional membership score and a low population proportionality score; this is an important indicator that much of the concern of under-representation of large cities in RIGOs has been over-stated. Finally, I conclude with some key findings about who is permitted to represent local governments on the boards of RIGOs. Unlike theories of administrative conjunction (Frederickson, 1999), RIGO boards rely on a local government’s elected officials (not appointed) to work collaboratively. Little has been studied empirically as to how local elected officials work cross-boundary in an American context, especially when compared to the appointed staff.

I present two profiles of different RIGOs in Chapter 5. Both of these profiles use the methods from Chapters 3 & 4 to measure institutional membership and population proportionality in RIGO collective choice arrangements in different ways. In developing these profiles, I rely on original documentation provided by the RIGO, news reports, selected relevant academic articles, and select interviews. Chapter 5 applies these methods to a set of proposals presented to the board when the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council re-started its organization in 2012 and measure an organization's collective choice arrangements over time, using the Sacramento Area Council of Governments as an example. The Sacramento region saw a rapid expansion of population from 1960-2010 that was unevenly felt throughout the region leading to shifting disparities. Substantial municipal incorporations occurred during that period as well, creating new local government members to incorporate in collective choice arrangements.

In Chapter 6, I conclude with the policy implications of my research. I focus this section on the ways my findings can be applied by practitioners. I also discuss a future research agenda that can identify underlying factors in how RIGOs balance institutional membership and population proportionality and how this balance may impact policy outcomes within and across regions. I also seek to move beyond the governance documents and evaluate how decisions are made within RIGOs across three highly interrelated facets: informal governance, the motivations and perceptions of board members, and the principal-agent dynamic between the board and RIGO staff. I also return to the normative scholarship on how regions ought to govern themselves and discuss the ramifications of these findings in that light.

By integrating the literature on international organizations, my research reframes much of the conventional wisdom about organizations like RIGOs. The conceptualizing and modeling

they use to understand how governments cooperate sheds new light on RIGOs in a larger perspective than simply another form of interlocal activity. Rather than prior research's reliance on survey data, coding the existing governance documents gives a much richer view of the ways local governments share decision-making authority. These documents show striking this balance between the variety of local governments requires innovation, evolution, and diplomacy. The implications of these findings are substantial for both academics and practitioners.

2.0 Literature Review

In this chapter, I begin by summarizing the existing scholarship on governance of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations and identify several conceptual and methodological gaps. To help address these gaps, I introduce and justify importing elements of the international organizations methodological framework and research agenda onto RIGOs. I then examine the limitations of the international organization approach. Finally, I explore the ways in which new regionalist scholarship and international organizations view the role of “great powers” within these bodies.

2.1 Existing Scholarship on the Governance of Cross-Boundary Intergovernmental Organizations

Very little empirical research has been done that has evaluated the representational rights of local governments within cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations. Much of what has been done nationally has been part of broader evaluations of the entire scope of the functions and governance of Councils of Governments (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Bryan & Wolf, 2009; Dodge, 1996; Mogulof, 1971; Wikstrom, 1977; Wyman, 1994) or by selecting a population based on specific components like Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Barbour, 2015; Enschede, 2008; FCRC Consensus Center, 2012; McDowell, 1995; Nelson, Sanchez, Wolf, & Farquhar, 2003; Sanchez, 2006). As a result, much of what we know nationally about the collective choice arrangements of these organizations is quite superficial. Much of the research that has evaluated the governance of COGs and MPOs with depth has been

limited to case studies (Lindstrom, 2010; Luna, 2015; Visser, 2004) or to a restricted sample based on state criteria (J. L. Hall, 2008; Kwon & Park, 2014; Lewis & Sprague, 1997). As a result, highly simplistic nominal survey results of collective choice arrangements often have substituted for a more refined understanding of these complex structures. These rather blunt survey results are the genesis of the “one-member, one-vote” refrain common throughout the discussion of COGs and MPOs.

Despite the limited empirical evidence supporting it, scholarship cites the “one-member, one-vote” governance structure as a cause for the perceived weakness of COGs and MPOs. Orfield and Dawes (2016) describe the current collective choice arrangements of MPOs as undemocratic: “The general lack of representational voting within MPO governing boards also undermines effective regional governance because non-democratic governance structures tend to produce outcomes that go against the interests of underrepresented parties” (pg. 11). Zimmerman identifies the one-member, one-vote model as benefitting suburbs, while a one-person, one-vote model favors cities (Zimmermann, 2011). COGs and MPOs are often contrasted with Met Council in the Twin Cities and Portland Metro (OR) that both use districts that cut across municipal and county boundaries to identify representatives to purportedly generate more equitable growth and development (Orfield & Luce, 2012; Rusk, 2013). What has not yet been parsed in the Met Council and Portland Metro hagiographies is the impact of the collective choice arrangements compared to these organizations’ more robust statutory authority. Were an organization like the Greater Vancouver Regional District to emerge in the United States that provides representation based on local government boundaries and with substantial powers (Wolman, 2017), we could begin to disaggregate the impact of each of these factors individually.

Simultaneously to the above developments, scholarship in the public administration field has put an overt focus on how professional staff perceives collaboration across boundaries, with little understanding of how elected officials operate in these organizations. Much of the recent scholarship has been built from Frederickson's (1999) "administrative conjunction." In the twenty years since, scholars have built a solid body of knowledge about the networks of interlocal agreements (usually negotiated by professional staff), sometimes using participation in a cross-boundary intergovernmental organization as an independent variable to predict the prevalence of this more ad hoc form of cooperation (Aldag & Warner, 2017; Carr, LeRoux, & Shrestha, 2009; LeRoux, Brandenburger, & Pandey, 2010; Thurmaier & Wood, 2002). Relatively little scholarship has examined the role of elected officials on the boards of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations and how they receive input, make decisions and collaborate as board members. What has been done has tied the relative presence of elected officials compared to professional staff regarding transportation outcomes (Gerber & Gibson, 2009).

The methods used thus far to empirically investigate collective choice arrangements in cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations can be improved substantially. Our initial understanding of collective choice arrangements were based on surveys of regional council executive directors (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Wyman, 1994). These surveys gave respondents four options to describe the structure of their boards: one-member, one-vote, one-person, one-vote, hybrid, or other. These were efficient, reasonable approaches to gathering this data at the time. In 2003, scholars identified a need for more granular information:

“... it was found that voting structure is not disclosed through popular mechanisms such as the Internet, through MPO publications, or in any federal compendium. Although some MPO websites have this information and some

provide it through a variety of printed media, for others this basic piece of information is simply not accessible remotely, including by personal contact (e.g., e-mail and letter).” (page 4) (Nelson et al., 2003)

In the fifteen years since this was written, governments have substantially expanded the information available from the internet. This has extended to RIGOs and other cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations. While not every RIGO publicly posts by-laws or other governance documents, they are now substantially more accessible online than they were in 2003 and technology has allowed RIGO professional staff to send documents more easily.

With more granular information available in bylaws, charters, joint powers agreements, and other governing documents, operationalizing can become more sophisticated than a four-category, nominal survey result. These governing documents outline which local governments (counties, municipalities, townships) are entitled to representational rights. While the initial survey recognized the potential for different representational rights across multiple chambers (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973), more complete documentation allows for direct comparisons across those chambers. This information also now allows for those local government members to be the units of analysis based on the number of representatives to which they are permitted. This information can then be compared to their populations to identify the extent of population (dis-) proportionality. Aggregation of this data can provide a much more refined picture of the collective choice arrangements of RIGOs. The Miller, Nelles, Dougherty, & Rickabaugh (2018) national database of RIGOs allows for a consistent, operationalized population from which a random sample can be drawn to gather this information and create generalizable findings.

These governance documents further identify who is permitted to represent a member local government (citizen, elected official, professional staff); this presents a wealth of

opportunities to eventually test a variety of conflicting and under-developed research. The prior lack of a compendium of governance documentation limits our ability to know what general trends in representation might exist on RIGO boards, but previous scholarship has indicated the distinction between elected officials and professional staff is important. In contrast to Gerber & Gibson (2009), a survey involving a hypothetical regional governance initiative determined a higher level for support from elected officials than appointed officials (Matkin & Frederickson, 2009). However our understanding of the network of elected officials is still quite limited (Feiock, Lee, Park, & Lee, 2010), and even less is known about the ways in which they make decisions.

There are a variety of frameworks for regional governance (Feiock, 2009; Foster & Barnes, 2011) and calls for expanded empirical research (Basolo, 2003; Bryan & Wolf, 2009; Miller, Nelles, Dougherty, & Rickabaugh, 2018). A large-scale effort to collect governance documents ameliorates some of these concerns. But, how to code and analyze these documents requires grounding in comparable literature. In the following section, I justify why a research agenda and methods selectively imported from the international organizations literature can provide a valuable source of scholarship to support this work.

2.2 Introducing the International Organizations Literature to RIGOs

Albeit at different scales, the fundamentals of the two classes of organizations mirror one another. The Union of International Associations has a simple definition for their members: “(a) being based on a formal instrument of agreement between the governments of states; (b) including three or more states as parties to the agreement; and (c) possessing a permanent

secretariat performing ongoing tasks” (Dijkzeul & Beigbeder, 2003, pg. 3). RIGOs meet this same definition when scaled down to the American regional level. They were founded through joint powers agreements, charters or other founding documents, include three or more local governments, and retain permanent staff to oversee the regular operations under the guidance of the members of the organization.

Cross-boundary organizations in the United States (like RIGOs) and international organizations occupy reasonably similar spaces on spectrums that compare intergovernmental cooperation and competition. Participation in a RIGO (or IO) is an act of cooperation, but one that has relatively few limits on a local government’s autonomy while retaining the opportunities for gains from collaborating across boundaries. Whether this is optimal for public choice scholars or advocates of regional government is a separate question. Likewise in the international sphere, realist scholarship perceives the interactions of states as anarchical and highly competitive (Waltz, 2001). Nevertheless, nations seek gains from cooperation in ways that respect sovereignty through international organizations. And while world government is exponentially less likely to occur than a universe of American metropolitan governments, they both represent useful termini of an institution that allows for maximal cooperation and minimal autonomy.

Both international organizations and RIGOs are subject to criticism from normative scholarship and political forces tugging at them from both ends of these spectrums. New regionalist scholars have derided organizations like RIGOs for focusing on only the lowest common denominator problems (J. S. Hall, 2009; Orfield & Dawes, 2016), while facing political criticism from American conservatives that they are subverting local autonomy (Idahoans Against Agenda 21, 2015). Glass (2018) summarizes these arguments as having “settled into a

stale détente despite the continuing significance of city-regions to economic growth” (pg. 1). Similarly, international organizations face criticisms from normative constructivist scholars who suggest these organizations are not empowered enough to tackle the true challenges they are designed to address. Koremenos, Lipson, & Snidal (2001) explain, that for good or for bad, “... states use international institutions to further their own goals, and they design institutions accordingly” (page 762). Meanwhile, efforts like Brexit and the rise of nationalist parties on continental Europe are, in part, a response to a perceived over-reach of the European Union.

Throughout these comparisons, I use language that can be consistently applied to both international organizations (IO) and RIGOs. My use of the term members refers to the governments themselves that are party to the agreement; IO literature refers to these as member states and within RIGOs these are restricted to local governments. Representatives are the “accredited delegates of their governments, who have the prime responsibility in the decision-making process” (Jordan, et al., 2001, pg. 211). However, these representatives need not be elected officials; representatives may be citizens appointed by elected officials to represent the government as a whole. Additionally, in both RIGOs and IOs, “a government may use representatives of private interest groups or [business interests] as participants at various levels in the [organizational] decision-making process” (Jordan et al., 2001, pg. 211). In order to comply with EDA regulations, many RIGOs must include in the decision-making process “private sector, public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals” (13 CFR Ch. III (1-1-16 Edition, §304.2(c)(2))).

Within the governing documents, members are provided representational rights. I use this term to encompass provisions in the document that enable, provide or restrict each member

within the decision-making process. This would include, but is not limited to: specifying representation in various chambers and committees, provisions under alternate voting rules, and constraints on who may serve as a representative. The members' aggregated representational rights under the governing documents are described here as collective choice arrangements (Crawford & Ostrom, 2005; Ostrom, 1990).

Certainly there is variation in the scope of responsibilities and the collective choice arrangements amongst and between RIGOs and international organizations, but they have had minimal cross-pollination in scholarly activity. Frug & Barron (2013) propose a hypothetical "regional legislature" that would replace organizations like RIGOs loosely based around representational principles of the European Union with increased statutory authority. Enschede (2008) applied formal models developed for understanding representation in international organizations research to Metropolitan Planning Organizations. However, beyond this, the crossover applications are scant. From the American domestic perspective, some of this is explained by the intense focus of late on the networks of bilateral, internally administered, interlocal agreements rather than on the institutions formed by multilateral, delegated, mutually binding agreements (Feiock, 2009). Only recently has there been renewed interest in "real existing regionalism," of which RIGOs are certainly one facet (Addie & Keil, 2015; Schafran, 2014). Meanwhile, the international organizations scholarship has blossomed, in part, due to a more limited number of potential players and a smaller population of organizations that allows for a more in-depth analysis. As a result, the international organizations literature has far outpaced the American domestic literature. Our understanding of RIGOs (and other cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations) can be greatly enhanced by learning from our counterparts studying international organizations, in both theory and method.

This dissertation focuses on demonstrating that there is variation in the collective choice arrangements of RIGOs, however, this is often implicitly conflated with the authority of a RIGO (see Hall [2009] quote on Page 4 and also Mogulof, 1971; Orfield & Luce, 2012; Wikstrom, 1977). In international organizations literature, the two concepts are distinct but have an acknowledged relationship (Posner & Sykes, 2014). Much of the research that has lauded the Twin Cities Met Council and Portland Metro has credited their success to both their population proportional districts and their statutory authority that far exceeds what RIGOs are enabled to undertake (Frug & Barron, 2013; Katz, 2000; Orfield, 1997; Orfield & Luce, 2012; Rusk, 2013). What has yet to be demonstrated is which of the three elements that separate these two organizations from RIGOs (districts that cut across local government boundaries, population proportionality, and expanded statutory authority) are necessary and which are sufficient to see the outcomes these scholars value. My research develops new evidence that can be examined in this debate, particularly regarding the potential importance of population proportionality and local government membership. Much like in international organizations, the statutory authority of a RIGO can be parsed from its collective choice arrangements.

The remaining components of this section demonstrate the similarities between RIGOs and international organizations in purpose, and in institutional structure. I then explore how other elements of the international organizations literature can be imported to build out our understanding of the collective choice arrangements and the broader institutional components of RIGOs. I conclude by discussing some of the limitations and modifications necessary to effectively account for the differences between RIGOs and international organizations.

2.2.1 The Economic Benefits of Intergovernmental Cooperation

Be they municipal, county, state, or national borders, one of the key factors in favor of intergovernmental cooperation are the economic benefits. This was identified but not explored more deeply by Gerber and Gibson (2009): “Many regional governance arrangements are organized with the explicit goal of enhancing economic efficiency in public policy and service delivery across a region” (pg. 634) and in the subsequent footnote: “Discussions of regionalism parallel scholarship on globalization, which points to the collective benefits of authority migration away from the nation-state and toward supranational institutions” (pg. 634). Economic benefits are the genesis of organizations like the World Trade Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the attempts at metropolitan government outlined in Chapter 1. In a neoliberal economic system, competition heavily incentivizes taking advantage of these benefits, so as not to be left behind. Both RIGOs and international organizations see many of the same categories of benefits from their efforts. In this section, I briefly outline two broad categories of such benefits: economic security and competitiveness, and the coordination across borders. These benefits often are the same impetus for internally-administered, bilateral policy networks (Feiock, 2009), but I demonstrate in this section the ways in which both local governments and national governments have delegated these functions to new institutions. Within each section, I identify the principles behind the accumulation of benefits and how these benefits manifest in the actions of example organizations.

One of the main purposes of the formation of both RIGOs and international organizations is the gain of benefits from the economy of scale. Certain governmental functions with high overhead costs or functions undertaken with limited resources may be better accomplished (either at lower cost or at higher quality) through cooperation in burden-sharing (Aldag &

Warner, 2017; Dolan, 1990; Leroux & Carr, 2007; Morgan & Hirlinger, 1991). For example, rural municipal or county governments may not have the technical or financial capacity to implement broadband infrastructure in communities where the private market is unwilling to invest. By partnering and collaborating through a RIGO, this initiative can be accomplished more efficiently collectively than it could have been individually. United Nations peacekeeping missions would be a similar example on an international scale. Having an organization dedicated to providing this function means that smaller nations can contribute a small amount and receive substantially more in benefits (in security) than by doing so individually.

Specialization within organizations also allows for gains in cooperation as well. Within the international sphere, this often takes the form of trade. The European Union began as trading partners for coal and steel and evolved over time to encompass a wide variety of goods and services across an increasing number of trading partners. The interdependence across these countries generated benefits in security as well as economic growth. Within the American regional context, this specialization still occurs that creates interdependence, but at a different scale. Similar to diversification in industry, local governments also have adopted “a kind of ‘competition in creativity’ ... where consumers and producers alike are caught up in an almost compulsive obsession for that which is ‘new’” (Penrose & Pitelis, pg. 171). However, most local governments do not have the capacity to simultaneously pursue new jobs, new housing stock, new businesses, and other new community assets, thus they specialize their efforts. The typologies that classify suburbs as bedroom communities, centers of industry, or commercial suburbs are an indication that an awareness of this specialization is happening (Garreau, 1992; Hanlon, Vicino, & Short, 2006; Teaford, 2008). We do have some evidence this specialization occurs and its impacts on the region in the ways upmarket municipalities protect this status

within their region by denying affordable housing projects (Albright, Derickson, & Massey, 2013; Freeman & Schuetz, 2016) and intra-metropolitan agglomeration economies (Waldfoegel, 2010). What has not yet been identified is if these different specialized types of urban forms seek different goals from a RIGO, and if so, how. Though, it seems highly plausible that a bedroom community would seek community development funding or human services initiatives more aggressively and a suburb focusing on industry or commerce may focus more on economic development assistance, but neither the results nor the processes underneath have been investigated.

Certain governmental functions require capital costs that result in highly specific assets or involve tasks that are difficult to measure outcomes; these functions are more likely to be efficiently accomplished through cooperative activity (Brown & Potoski, 2003). The proposal to create permanent sites for the summer and winter Olympics rather than consistently re-investing in new infrastructure across the globe is an example of highly specific assets that can be more efficiently accomplished through collective activity than individually (Baade & Matheson, 2016). Similarly, a metropolitan region's investment of federal transportation monies in its airport or locks and dams are highly specific assets that have benefits for all members better achieved through cooperation. When governmental functions are difficult to measure or prescribe precise actions (such as international security missions or services for the elderly), benefits can accrue from collaboration by reducing transaction costs in the development and administration of services. Furthermore, it can diffuse the risk of unanticipated costs of such activities over a larger pool of parties.

Delegating to an external institution the coordination of activities across borders and the conservation of common pool resources also reduces transaction costs (E. Ostrom, 1990; V.

Ostrom, 2008; Williamson, 1981; O. R. Young, 1994). Hawkins (2006) identifies this in the context of international organizations: “The greater the externalities, the more likely states are to engage in mutually coordinated action. The gains from cooperation, however, can also be enhanced by delegating to an agent” (pg. 15). International organizations like the European Union have created standards for the flow of citizens and goods across borders that have obviated the need for bilateral re-negotiations as markets or circumstances have shifted. In many ways, Brexit has highlighted the efficiency of the European Union system from a transaction-cost perspective. International organizations like the International Seabed Authority are designed to ensure the sustainable exploration and extraction of minerals in international waters. Similarly at the domestic regional scale, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations identified both the need to coordinate activities across borders and conserve common pool resources at the time many RIGOs were being founded (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1962). RIGOs maintain third party, technical staff that can evaluate the costs and benefits of a project beyond a municipal or county border to the region as a whole. Many Montana RIGOs act simultaneously as an Economic Development District and as a state conservation district. In more urban areas, many RIGOs pair their function as a Metropolitan Planning Organization with a federally-required Congestion Management and Air Quality program that ties its transportation investments to its impacts on health on quality of life.

Both local and national governments cooperate and delegate to new institutions for many of the same reasons. Next, I turn to the similarities these organizations share in their institutional design.

2.2.2 Similarities in Institutional Design Between RIGOs & International Organizations

Both RIGOs and International Organizations are primarily products of the twentieth century. Most efforts prior to World War II like the League of Nations or the efforts at two-tiered metropolitan government were not ultimately successful in developing a sustainable institution. However, at both scales, the dynamic shifts in economics and security after the war created crises that accelerated the need for cooperative institutions. It was in this time period that coalitions of nations founded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, among others to promote security and strong economies through interdependence. Soon thereafter at the domestic regional scale, suburbanization was spanning across county (and state) lines and the need for rural economic development in places like Appalachia and the Mountain West was growing. The federal and state governments recognized that municipalities and counties would require interdependence to overcome their challenges as well. However, building institutions to be sustainable representative voices of their members is rarely a one-size-fits-all approach. While the international organizations literature recognizes a variety of approaches to building collective choice arrangements (Jordan et al., 2001; Posner & Sykes, 2014; Vestergaard & Wade, 2013), the prior American domestic regional literature has relied primarily on one or two nominal questions on a survey to make “one-member, one-vote” generalizations about the governance of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations like RIGOs (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Wyman, 1994). This section further investigates the ways in which RIGOs and International Organizations share institutional design similarities.

RIGOs have similar precipitating conditions that Keohane (1984) identified that gave rise to international organizations. Either by state mandate or by the wills of the local governments

themselves, a limited number of actors were identified. These actors have existing patterns of interactions that build confidence amongst one another. In an American domestic regional context, some of this confidence is reaffirmed by contract law and other state actions that can prevent reneging. These actors also share interests; the quality of a region's workforce, transportation infrastructure, and economic development is outside the control of any one local government, but with impacts on all local governments. Those three policy areas in particular are particularly issue dense, making cooperation more likely as well on related policies like congestion management and air quality, some kinds of housing policies, and community development. The academic discussion surrounding megaregions provides a good point of contrast here. Glass (2015) recognizes the difficulties in overcoming the sheer plethora of local governments in creating a Great Lakes megaregional governance organization; this runs counter to Keohane's precondition of a limited number of actors. Whether there are sufficient existing patterns of interaction among those actors, their shared interests, or the necessary issue density to support a sustainable mega-regional organization has yet to be explored empirically with the actors themselves.

Both RIGOs and international organizations have limits in their scope of activities that leave substantial autonomy or sovereignty to their members. The authority of the organizations is certainly a contributing factor to the ways in which collective choice arrangements are designed. While theory suggests that increasing the delegated authority of the institution leads to higher external costs from decisions against a member's interests (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962), it is unclear how those effects are counterbalanced in collective choice arrangements by the reduced transaction costs and gains from economies of scale. Furthermore, these are not known objective values at the time of consent; the collective choice arrangements are the result of members'

perceived costs and benefits projected in the future. As a result, there is strong reason to believe the representational rights of the members of RIGOs and international organizations are influenced by the authority delegated to the organization, but that relationship remains unclear (Posner & Sykes, 2014).

The international organizations literature recognizes that the collective choice arrangements are a balance of institutional membership and proportionality that evolve over time, while the scholarship on American cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations has yet to substantively recognize this. The Bretton Woods Agreement formed the International Monetary Fund's collective choice arrangements as a balance between "a one-member, one-vote system and voting based purely on the size of each country's economy" (Woodward, 2007, pg. 1). The IMF's "voice" reforms (2010) created a new balance that increased the collective voting power of developing and transition countries, but reclassified some advanced economies that Vestergaard and Wade suggest keeps the powerful countries in control (Vestergaard & Wade, 2013). The European Union's Treaty of Lisbon (2007) has also made substantial changes to the representational rights of their members that responded to shifts in authority, governance, and membership since the Treaty of Nice (2001), but both structures balanced the institutional membership with the population proportionality. The UN General Assembly operates on a one-member, one-vote structure, but provides unique representation that reflects the variation in political power through bodies like the Security Council. Proposals to add emerging powers like India or Brazil as permanent members to the UN Security Council would be another example of an awareness that these structures are capable of evolving to meet member needs amidst changing conditions (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017). By contrast, American regional literature has relatively few examples of how collective choice arrangements have evolved over

time. ACIR (1973) briefly outlined how the City of Cleveland pushed for stronger representation in the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA), eventually withdrew from the organization, and ultimately led to NOACA being decertified by HUD. Little has been written about how collective choice arrangements have evolved over time since 1973.

Unlike internally administered treaties or interlocal agreements, delegating to a new institution provides for a neutral, third party technical staff that responds to the will of the board. As a result, these arrangements create a collective principal-agent relationship that impacts the actions of the staff of international organizations (Hawkins, 2006). The relationship between a RIGO board and its executive director or other staff has not been empirically explored, but Hawkins sees parallels:

“It is not inherently more difficult to design effective delegation mechanisms at the international level than at the domestic level. There are variations in the ease of monitoring and controlling different IOs and in the extent to which states are willing to delegate to international agents.” (Hawkins, 2006, page 5)

One example of the benefits of this delegation is creating common, neutral information on which the board can make decisions. International organizations require credible information to overcome asymmetries that a technical staff can provide (Keohane, 1990); again it seems highly plausible that RIGO staff fulfill the same need in a domestic American regional context but has yet to be explored. Another way in which these organizations are similar is that not only do the representatives to the board maintain a principal-agent relationship with the RIGO (or IO) staff, they also act as principals (either singularly or collectively) with the administrative staff of their home government. I am not currently aware of research that has tackled these ideas at either the American domestic regional or international scales.

Having identified several ways in which RIGO and international organizations both provide similar benefits and operate in institutionally similar ways, I discuss in the next section ways to import some of the methods and research questions international organizations have developed and refined to improve the understanding of RIGOs.

2.2.3 Importing International Organizations' Research Methods and Questions to the Board Structures of RIGOs

The literature that has developed to understand international organizations is considerably more advanced than that of cross-boundary international organizations (including RIGOs). I borrow from these advances to tackle the questions surrounding board structures and the representational rights of member governments in RIGOs. The formal modeling of this scholarship is quite well developed and is more member-neutral than the domestic regional literature. Importing this formal modeling allows for a more holistic view of RIGOs rather than a focus on the disparities of central cities relative to population.

The international organizations literature has built complex game theoretic and mathematical models to evaluate their collective choice arrangements, which have not been substantially imported into the literature on cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations. Most of these models are based on the balances identified earlier between institutional membership and population proportionality. Some of these formal models propose an optimal structure using different mathematical criteria (Kirsch & Langner, 2011; Słomczyński & Życzkowski, n.d.), others tie governance structures to outcomes (Finus, Altamirano-Cabrera, & Van Ierland, 2005), while others identify methods through which these balances can be measured (Taagepera & Shugart, 1989). The scholarship that has imported any of these concepts to the

regional domestic literature is exceptionally limited. Lewis & Sprague applied Taagepera & Shugart's Deviation Index (D) to California Metropolitan Planning Organizations, but focused only on the population proportionality. Enschede (2008) identified how closely a limited set of Metropolitan Planning Organizations hewed to several similar formal models. However, no research has applied these principles to a random sample of cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations like RIGOs to present a composite national picture of board structures.

2.2.4 Limitations of Comparing RIGOs and International Organizations

While there are a multitude of characteristics that RIGOs and international organizations share, there are, as always, limitations. In this section, I identify four such differences. First, I discuss the impact of higher levels of government for RIGOs as compared to an anarchic international order that relies on norms and reputation. Second, I discuss the division of policy across international organizations, as compared to the more holistic RIGOs. Third, I discuss how the nested political structures, particularly municipalities within counties, alter the ways in which we can import the international organization literature. Fourth, I discuss differences between RIGOs and IOs in who is permitted to represent member governments.

Because local governments created by their respective states that come together form RIGOs, the building blocks are different from international organizations. In many states, the RIGOs themselves are creatures of the state with boundaries drawn by the state governments (see previous discussion in Chapter 1, also Miller in Miller et al., 2018; Whisman, 2013). As a result, the state retains the authority to dismantle or reorganize these bodies without the consent of the local governments themselves. Florida Governor Rick Scott and the state legislature recently abolished the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council and redistributed its members to other

regional planning councils (Crane, 2015). The State of Connecticut also recently reorganized its RIGOs (“CT’s Regional Planning Agencies Consolidate, Realign and Disappear,” 2014). In some cases, the state not only prescribes the boundaries, but also the representational rights of members. However, these representational rights are still negotiated, just by the state’s elected officials rather than the members themselves. International organizations have no higher authority prescribing or enforcing boundaries, membership and representational rights, therefore they rely on norms, sanctions and reputation to ensure fellow members live up to their agreements. As a result, there may be limitations in comparing RIGOs and international organizations as they relate to withdrawal, reneging on commitments, or the use of a state’s power to reorganize local governments.

One of the Miller and Nelles’s (2018) criteria of a RIGO is a broad policy agenda, however international organizations may have narrower agendas. In some cases, the organizations are quite specialized like the International Whaling Commission or the International Seabed Authority, while others like the United Nations and European Union are quite broad in scope. This becomes a potential limitation when members logroll across different policy arenas. While we know little about how this occurs within RIGOs, it would likely happen internally (such as trading votes between the RIGO’s roles as Economic Development District and Metropolitan Planning Organization). But there is evidence of logrolling occurring across multiple international organizations where membership is shared (Dreher, Sturm, & Vreeland, 2009; Strand & Tuman, 2012). Caution should be exercised when comparing the governance of international organizations and RIGOs to ensure the policy agendas are sufficiently broad to adequately account for these differences.

With a few limited exceptions most international organizations rely on nations as unitary actors⁸. In RIGOs, however, counties and their respective municipalities both may be members of their RIGOs. Municipalities may also spill across county borders. These differences do not substantively affect the methods international organizations use to understand measure proportionality and institutional membership, but does require nuance in the interpretation of findings. The electorate of a municipality may be represented dually by municipal and county representatives to their RIGO, but there may be cases where those two representatives pursue different policy agendas and vote differently. For that reason, I focus on the representational rights of local government members. This is a key methodological distinction that may need further modifications, for example, in megaregional governance research. Megaregions often span state boundaries and would need to integrate officials from multiple state governments into the board structures or potentially cross international borders with corridors like Buffalo-Toronto or El Paso-Juarez requiring multi-national board representation.

Under the governance documents, who is permitted to represent a member government may also experience substantial differences, either as a function of their position or demographically. There are certainly important distinctions between the authorities and prevalence of strong and weak mayors, councils, and managers. However, within RIGOs, it is fairly easy to classify potential representatives as elected officials, professional staff, citizens, and “others.” Within the potential universe of representatives to international organizations, the distinctions between monarchs, prime ministers, ministers, and other appointed officials are far

⁸ The International Conference on Local Environmental Initiatives allows sub-national actors as members. Belarus and Ukraine were full members in the United Nations, despite part of the Soviet Union for several decades (Jordan et al., 2001).

more diverse. A second aspect to this limitation is the role of minority participation on RIGO boards. Communities of color are specifically provided representation on many boards, in part, to overcome resistance to regional initiatives. These concerns were well summarized by John A. Powell:

[Minority] resistance is often based on non-economic concerns: the loss of political control and cultural control or identity. Supporters of regionalism often discount these concerns, suggesting that minorities do not have meaningful political control or cultural identity to begin with, and that the price paid for this minimal control is too high. But to ignore these claims from the minority community is a serious mistake, because it underestimates the value of identity and makes regionalism feel like another solution imposed on people of color by whites who “know better.” (Powell, 1999, page 222)

The ability to import or apply an international organizations framework to these two specific questions appears highly limited. Summary statistics about these two questions are gathered and present interesting future research opportunities, but are not discussed to the same depth.

2.2.5 “The Great Powers” in RIGOs and International Organizations

Having outlined the similarities between RIGOs and international organizations, I contrast in this section the differing ways that new regionalist scholars and international organizations scholars view the role of “great powers” within their respective cooperative, delegated institutions. Neorealist international relations scholar Kenneth Waltz defines great powers as having five criteria: “(1) population and territory, (2) resource endowment, (3) economic capability, (4) political stability and competence, and (5) military strength” (Waltz, 1993, pg. 50). While these criteria were designed to identify nations in international affairs, I argue we can think of four of these five criteria (excluding military strength) as necessary factors

to classify municipalities⁹ as “great powers” within their respective regions. Applying these criteria in absolute terms at a national scope would likely yield a list dominated by the historic center cities of metropolitan regions. The overwhelming body of research on cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations has focused on the (under-)representation of these center cities relative to their populations and the resulting promotion of suburbanization and sprawl. Meanwhile, I demonstrate later in this section that the international organizations literature has largely seen “great powers” as using these institutions as tools to accomplish their agendas without appearing unilateral. Little empirical evidence suggests that center cities have acted in this way within RIGOs, however Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren (1961) express concern about this possibility when they describe “Gargantua” as a “political system with a single dominant center for making decisions is viewed as the ideal model for the organization of metropolitan government” (V. Ostrom, Tiebout, & Warren, 1961, pg. 831). As a result, we have a continuum of the role of “great powers” within organizations from dominant to passive that we can test.

Before evaluating the literature, a point of clarification is in order on how “great powers” can be structured within organizations; organizations (both international and within American regions) are not always centered around a single “great power.” Within the literature on megaregions, Pain & Taylor (2007) and Schafran (2015) identify what they call Process A and Process B regions. Harrison & Hoyler (2015) challenge several facets of the mega-regional concept, but the principles of Process A and Process B have tremendous value applied to both American domestic regions and the footprints of international organizations. Process A megaregions are those that are built around a primary city. Within RIGOs, these would be local

⁹ Because most of the new regionalist literature has focused on cities rather than urban counties or other territorial distinctions, I focus here on municipalities.

government members with an overwhelmingly large population relative to the overall population; examples would include San Diego in the San Diego Association of Governments (CA) or Chicago within the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (IL)¹⁰. Within international organizations, one would similarly classify the role of the United States within Organization of American States. Process B megaregions are built more polycentrically. Within RIGOs, an example of Process B would be the Maricopa Association of Governments (AZ); it is built around four municipalities with populations over 200,000 (Phoenix, Mesa, Glendale and Scottsdale). The UN Security Council would be an example of a Process B international organization with dedicated membership and specialized voting rules for the United States, China, and Russia. These need not be mutually exclusive categories; one could imagine a primary large city and an edge city (or multiple edge cities) cooperating together within the same RIGO (ex: Orlando and Kissimmee, Florida). These may not always be static designations, either. Development and demographic changes may create a need to alter the representational rights of members. Proposals to add new nations like Brazil and India as permanent members of the UN Security Council to reflect their growth and importance would make that body even more polycentric.

This distinction between RIGOs with single “great powers” and polycentric regions is critical to understanding why a more holistic method of analyzing representational rights is required. As outlined in Chapter 1, focusing solely on the under-representation of center cities reifies the “city-country ideology” (Wachsmuth, 2013) and undervalues the importance smaller

¹⁰ While this application focuses on the role of large cities within RIGOs, both Process A and B can be applied more generally. For example, Billings (MT) would be the primary city around the Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development District.

and in-between spaces have in the creation of a region (D. Young & Keil, 2014). The Process A vs. Process B distinction provides further evidence for the need to evaluate the region in total, rather than the representational rights of any individual member.

Much of the regionalist literature has portrayed the central cities as outnumbered by a one-member, one-vote board structure that allocates federal funding for local priorities over regional ones and promotes sprawl. Adhikari (2015) describes these boards as such: “Despite having an undertone of regional-type institution, they had a fragmented core-structure made up of local representatives coerced for forced collaboration. Competition for federal grants soon rekindled rivalry among participating localities” (page 15). Much of the work focused on the under-representation of center cities has evaluated the governance of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Benjamin, Kincaid, & McDowell (1994) created an index of central city voting power for MPOs and found that “central city residents are underrepresented on 68 MPO policymaking boards (79 percent)” (pg. 31). Sanchez (2006) evaluated the top fifty largest MPOs and found that urban areas represented 59% of the total population, but only 29% of the votes on MPO boards. Nelson et al., (2003) identified that for each additional suburban vote on an MPO board, 1-7% of funding for transit is re-allocated to highways. Orfield and Luce (2012) present table after table comparing other large metropolitan areas to Portland and the Twin Cities to demonstrate the value of those two unique regional organizations on measures of sprawl, equity, and economic growth. As a result, the perception of center cities on these boards within the new regionalist literature is hardly that of a “great power” despite their population, territory and economic prowess.

In contrast, much of the international organizations literature sees “great powers” as exercising a quiet form of dominance over lesser players. Formal governance of these bodies

gives smaller players a collective veto that could subvert the agenda of a great power; however, this is a highly rare occurrence. This is as true for polycentric organizations as it is for those with a primary “great power.” The rotating members outnumber the permanent members of the UN Security Council, 8-7. However those collective rotating members have never successfully advanced a resolution utilizing their majority (even symbolically) over the objections of the permanent members. The “voice” reforms of the IMF in 2010 gave the illusion of developing economies gaining authority in the organization, but were seen as largely token changes (Vestergaard & Wade, 2013). Similar trends occur throughout international organizations where the “great powers” hold a minority of formal power but utilize informal leverage to ensure their agenda is consistently achieved (Stone, 2013). Japan utilizes its foreign aid to ensure smaller governments vote in line with its interests on the International Whaling Commission (Strand & Tuman, 2012). Unlike center cities, “great powers” on the international scene are portrayed as using international organizations to meet their objectives without appearing unilateral.

2.3 Conclusion

I take no normative position on what the role of center cities ought to be within a RIGO (formally or informally) nor do I take a position on what form of collective choice arrangements is optimal for a RIGO. However, neither public choice nor regionalist scholarship alone is sufficient to address these issues. Neither perspective “[provides] a satisfactory lens through which to engage with the contemporary problems of city-regions, as they mask the political exigencies and concerns that affect intra-regional communities” (Glass, 2018, pg. 1). In response to this call for additional perspectives, I introduced in this chapter some concepts, methods, and

research questions from the international organizations literature to a better understanding of RIGOs. The parallel between RIGOs and international organizations is strong, especially pertaining to a government's desire for autonomy, the benefits that government gains from cooperation, and the need for sufficient voice in an organization delegated to undertake that cooperation. The ways both of these classes of institutions implement their governance share substantial commonality as well. While there are limitations, importing the broad concepts of the international organizations presents a wealth of opportunities to answer how cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations undertake collective action.

The previous domestic scholarship has focused almost exclusively on the population (dis-)proportionality in representation of center cities within cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations and its implications for perpetuating sprawl and exacerbating blight in urban areas. At the other end of the spectrum, international organizations scholars view "great powers" as far more dominant in their organizations than new regionalist literature view "great powers" do in theirs. Perhaps as a response to this dominance, the international organizations literature has used more member-neutral methods to investigate collective choice arrangements. Using these principles reflected on RIGOs can generate a more comprehensive understanding of the representational rights of large and small local governments.

3.0 Methods

Like all forms of institutions, RIGOs are a collection of rules and norms that constrain behavior (March & Olsen, 1989). A RIGO's bylaws and other governance documents codify the formal processes that structure these interactions. These documents are the focus of the dissertation in three different ways: a national perspective on RIGOs using coding and quantitative methods, a demonstration of how a RIGO can use these quantitative methods to evaluate different proposal for collective choice arrangements, and how these methods can quantify how a RIGO's collective choice arrangements change over time (either by amendment, change in the environment, or both). This chapter outlines the steps in which I engaged to collect, interpret, and analyze these governance documents.

I argue that demographics and political structures are necessary to understand RIGO collective choice arrangements, but not sufficient. Local governments collectively consider a variety of other elements in crafting collective choice arrangements, including but not limited to: state legislation, the policy areas in which these organizations operate, path dependencies, and regional history. Many of these elements are also not yet well understood in the context of regional governance. Identifying the impact and interactions of all these components on collective choice arrangements is outside the scope of this dissertation. My approach to methods recognizes these limitations and puts these findings in their greater context.

I have chosen to pursue a multiple methods approach to generate complementary insights on this variation. While sometimes used interchangeably, I intentionally use "multiple methods" rather than "mixed methods" to avoid confusion (Ahmed & Sil, 2012). While my methods share similarities to mixed-method concepts like Lieberman's nested analysis (2005), I do not, for

example, seek to test formal models through case selection. These multiple methods demonstrate three different contributions of the quantitative methods for measuring institutional membership and population proportionality, but are not intended, for example, to generate causal conclusions. I begin by describing the universe of RIGOs and the sample from which I drew; all the information in the following chapters comes from organizations within this sample.

3.1 About the Sample

Throughout 2017, I collected governance documents from a random sample of Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs) using the database available at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS) website. The original dataset identifies, county by county¹¹, the cross-boundary organization with the largest geographic scope to which the county belongs. Often these organizations meet the definition of RIGOs, but may not always¹². In some cases, a region's MPO may not have the policy scope to qualify as a RIGO (ex: Erie County, NY [Buffalo] or Marion County, IN [Indianapolis]). In other instances, the region's organization may directly elect or have some other appointment process independent of local governments (ex: Portland Metro or Twin Cities' Met Council). Some counties may not have any affiliation with a cross-boundary organization (ex: Western Wyoming). From this list

¹¹ The database also uses municipalities when counties do not substantially align with participation in the organization (ex: New Hampshire) or when a municipality operates independent of a county (ex: many localities in Virginia).

¹² Figure 1 shows the distinctions between RIGOs, Regional MPOs, Unique Organizations, and Unattached Counties.

of counties, the 477 organizations that meet the definition of a RIGO constitute the universe for this research.

Given the minimal research on RIGOs thus far, a simple random sample was conducted. A total of 181 RIGOs were sampled, and governance documents from 150 RIGOs were collected. This resulted in a conversion rate of 83%. I collected any available RIGO bylaws, charters, joint powers agreements, handbooks, state statutes, articles of association and web content that allowed me to populate the database with reliable information directly from the organization itself or, as appropriate, under state mandate. In some cases, this information was publicly posted to their website. In others, I made phone calls and sent emails to executive directors and other staff. While I made significant efforts to fully populate the database with complete information, some documents were incomplete and my outreach was not returned. In one instance, the Southeast Wyoming Economic Development District, the bylaws give few formal requirements for membership, representation, and selection. This was confirmed to be an informal process by staff. These 150 RIGOs constitute the sample.

Thirty-seven states had multiple RIGOs randomly sampled; nine states had a single RIGO selected. Local governments in Nebraska and the District of Columbia were not selected in the sample. Hawai'i, Delaware, and Rhode Island have no RIGOs. See Figure 2 for the distribution by state. The five most populous RIGOs included in the dataset are: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Association of Bay Area Governments, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Philadelphia), Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (Detroit), and the Maricopa Association of Governments (Phoenix). The five least populous RIGOs were the Prince William Sound Economic Development District (Alaska), Southeast Montana Development Corporation, Great Northern Development Corporation (Montana),

Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, and the Tri-County Regional Development Council (North Dakota). 66% of the sample function as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations¹³; 38% function as Economic Development Districts.

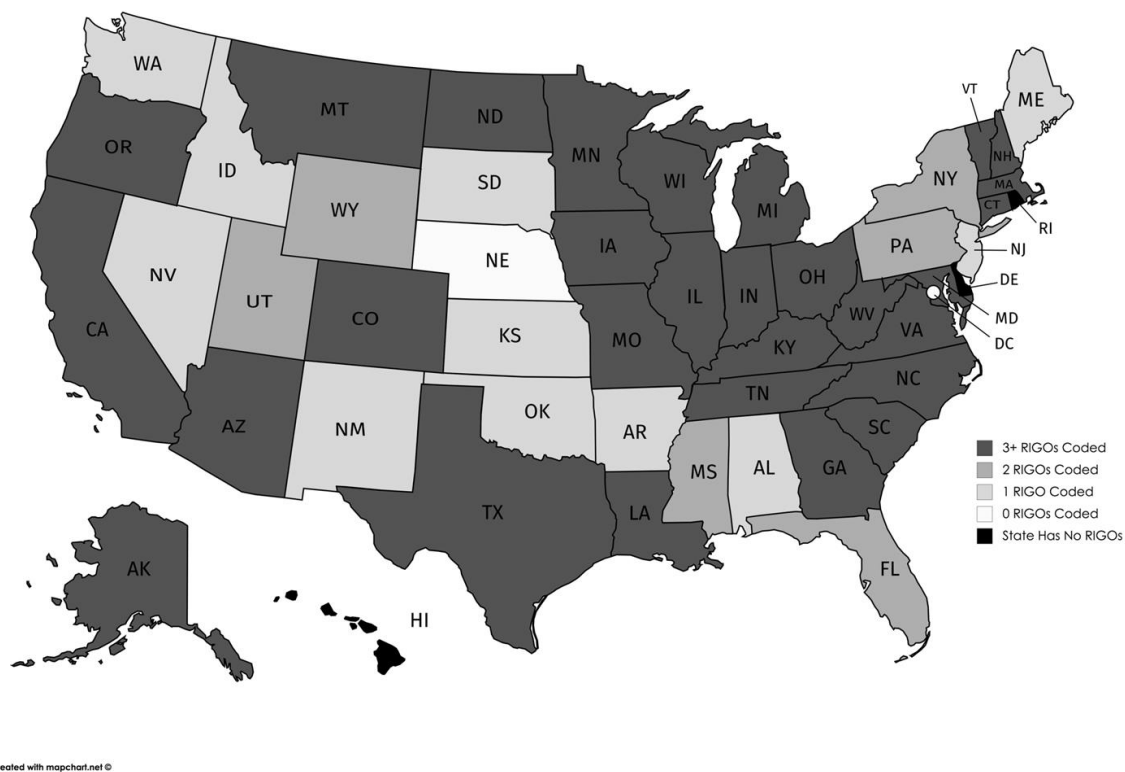


Figure 2 Map of RIGOs Included in Sample

¹³ These are "integrated urban" regions from Miller and Nelles (2018). There may be MPOs functioning within the geographic footprint of other RIGOs, but they are organizationally distinct from the RIGO.

3.2 Membership, Selection, and Representation

To provide clarity throughout the dissertation, I present definitions and distinctions here between three different characteristics of board structures: membership, selection, and representation. Within each of these traits, I demonstrate some common components that complicate the previous perception that these bodies are overwhelmingly structured as “one member, one vote.” Whether entirely through internal negotiations or influenced by state legislation, RIGOs have highly refined and sophisticated strategies and techniques to balance the decision-making authority of local governments. These processes result in highly variable governance documents, and more importantly, likely lead to highly variable outcomes.

3.2.1 Defining Membership

In the context of this research on RIGO boards, membership is defined as those general-purpose local governments eligible for singular or collective voting membership in the body’s most inclusive chamber. Bylaws and other governance documents make this explicit with language like this from the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado: “The Association hereby is composed of the Counties: (1) Garfield, (2) Mesa, (3) Moffat, (4) Rio Blanco, and (5) Routt, and the Municipal Corporations therein” (Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, 2009). While proclamations like this often coincides with membership, the definition also requires a vote in the body’s most inclusive chamber. I discuss the distinctions among chambers and special voting rules later within this chapter. It should suffice to say at this point that an investigation into the division of decision-making authority ought to, at minimum, require a local government to have voting privileges in its most inclusive chamber.

However, in many cases, local governments are aggregated together and given collective voting privileges, even in the most inclusive chamber. Collective representation can affect counties, municipalities, or both; I refer to these members as multijurisdictional. Minnesota State Law codifies multijurisdictional membership for municipalities based on population: “A commission shall consist of the following members: ... (5) one mayor or council member from a municipality of under 10,000 population from each county, selected by the mayors of all such municipalities in the county;” MN Stat § 462.388 (2016). In the East-West Gateway Council of Governments (St. Louis, MO-IL), two smaller counties (Franklin and Jefferson) on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River are afforded a single collective vote that alternates between the two counties but is consented to by both sets of county commissioners. The strategy of multijurisdictional membership is also used when one city (usually the largest) is given distinct singular membership, and the balance of municipalities within that county receives collective membership. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning provides multijurisdictional membership to the balance of municipalities within Cook County. The City of Lansing (Michigan) stretches into all three counties of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and has its own designated membership to the board; the remainder of each county is provided multijurisdictional membership. Multijurisdictional membership can also reflect differences in political structure. The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (Madison, WI) provides representation to both the Dane County Towns Association and the Dane County Cities and Villages Association. About 24% of the RIGOs in the sample have at least one multijurisdictional member.

Based on the information in these governance documents, the information on their website, and from the Center for Metropolitan Studies database, I confirmed the geographic

footprint of the RIGO to determine all eligible general-purpose local government members. This list of eligible members includes those who have elected not to participate and organizations so noted that represent local governments (e.g. councils of government, municipal conferences, etc.). Special districts, school districts, and state and federal agencies were omitted, as they fall outside the scope of the research questions.

Based on the membership of a RIGO, I classify them along a spectrum from county-dominant to municipally-dominant. A RIGO consisting entirely of counties is a Type I RIGO. A RIGO that provides membership to counties and *some* municipalities is a Type II RIGO. In some cases, RIGOs provide membership to *all* counties and municipalities within their specified region; there are Type III. In states where counties are negligible or non-existent, RIGOs may be municipalities-only (Type IV). Table 1 below outlines these differences, the frequency within the sample and Bernoulli confidence intervals for an estimate across the population of RIGOs. To be clear, this is a spectrum with categories for heuristic purposes. Following the descriptions of representation and selection, I present some examples of gradations within these classifications.

Table 1 RIGOs by Membership Type

Type	Description	% Frequency in Sample	% of Estimated Population (95% Bernoulli Confidence Interval)
I	Counties Only	12.84%	7.45% - 18.23%
II	Counties and <i>Some</i> Municipalities	19.59%	13.20% - 25.98%
III	Counties and <i>All</i> Municipalities	60.14%	52.25% - 68.03%
IV	Municipalities Only	7.43%	3.20% - 11.66%

The myriad ways that RIGO governance documents define membership is an important finding by itself. Even when a RIGO's collective choice arrangements indicate there is "one-member, one-vote" it cannot be assumed that all local governments are eligible to be members or that each member is only one local government. Type I, II, and IV RIGOs all limit which local governments are eligible for membership. Multijurisdictional membership could mean multiple counties or municipalities share representational rights. These more complicated definitions could be used for, among other things, balancing members' votes by population without weighting (like Franklin and Jefferson in the East-West Gateway Council of Governments). These definitions could also provide for specific membership based on political structure (like the Dane County Towns Association in the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission) or by limiting membership to the most relevant forms of local government to the RIGO's purpose (like Type IV RIGOs in three New England states). In some states, local government membership may be mandated through state legislation (see discussion of New Hampshire in Chapter 4).

3.2.2 Defining Representation

Membership is a characteristic of a local government; representation is afforded to individuals. Here I define representational rights as the number of seats and votes to which a general-purpose local government is entitled, and any constraints on who may hold those seats. I distinguish between seats and votes to reflect the different ways a RIGO board may choose to allocate them. In some cases, board governance documents prescribe the number of seats to which a local government is entitled based on population thresholds. One such example is the Richmond Regional Planning District in Virginia. Counties and independent cities are

automatically members; other municipal governments must have 3,500 residents to get a vote on the board. This means the smallest of local governments do not get an individual vote; their respective counties represent them. Members then have population thresholds to give additional representatives at 7,501, at 25,001, at 50,001, at 100,001, at 175,001 and at 250,001. In other cases, representatives may be equal in number on the board but have their vote weighted by factors outlined in the governance documents. In the High Country Council of Governments in northwestern North Carolina, the Executive Committee consists of two representatives from each county (one elected official from the county and one elected official selected by caucus from municipalities)¹⁴. Under the provision for weighted voting in the Executive Committee, each representative is entitled to one vote and additional votes for every 10,000 people in their jurisdiction or fraction thereof.

With the number of seats and votes outlined, governance documents may also prescribe who is entitled to be appointed to these positions¹⁵. This can take two forms: the position of the appointee and whom the position is to represent. The position of the appointee takes three forms: *ex officio*, classes of positions, and no constraints. *Ex officio* positions are any representatives named in the bylaws by virtue of the elected office they hold. In most cases, these are mayors, county executives, or council presidents. Classes of positions means any group of people from whom there is latitude in the selection; this includes elected officials, citizens, or professional

¹⁴ The Executive Committee also includes one representative from minority organizations appointed at large. Because this person does not represent a general-purpose local government, they are not included.

¹⁵ Local governments may have internal formal regulations or informal customs as to who receives representation. This research only investigates constraints on representation outlined in the RIGO governance documents.

staff¹⁶. In other cases, the local government may be entirely free to choose whomever they so choose to represent them on the RIGO board; these representatives are classified as “no constraints.” I describe more precise coding within these categories later in the chapter.

The local government may also need to comply with constraints on what sub-population the appointment is to represent. These take two primary forms: geographic constraints and minority representation. Geographic constraints are any restriction in representation based on the municipality (or area within a municipality) the representative lives. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has these constraints in place for multijurisdictional municipal members within Cook County. The bylaws outline the boundaries for each sub-region of Cook County, down to street names that delineate. In the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission (Weirton, WV – Steubenville, OH), bylaws state that three citizens¹⁷ from both Brooke and Hancock counties are to be appointed on behalf of the local governments. Because Weirton is the largest city and straddles both counties, each county is required to select one citizen from Weirton living within their respective counties.

Minority representation is any requirement that constrains member delegation selection based on ethnic background. There is an important distinction here between organizations or at-large representatives that represent minorities with a voice on a RIGO board and local government members required to select members based on ethnic background. The Appalachian Council of Governments (Greenville, SC) bylaws require that county councils select at least one representative from a minority ethnic background; counties over 200,000 must select at least

¹⁶ In exceptional cases, professional staff such as municipal engineers or managers are named *ex officio* as members of the RIGO board. For consistency’s sake, all professional staff appointments are classified together.

¹⁷ Bylaws refer to them as Community Interest Representatives.

two. This is an example of a required constraint on a local government's representation. Thirteen such provisions are found in the random sample of governance documents (8.72%). The Lewis & Clark Regional Development Council (Bismarck, North Dakota) provides a seat to "...represent identifiable and organized minority groups existing in the region. Selection of this member shall be made by the regional council upon recommendations by minority groups" (Constitution and Bylaws of the Lewis & Clark Regional Development Council, 2014). This provision would not be classified as minority representation because it does not impact a local government's delegation to the RIGO.

3.2.3 Defining Selection

When governance documents permit member latitude in the composition of their delegation, that member may have single or joint authority in the selection of the representative. The concept of selection can take five forms: *ex officio*, selection by county, selection by municipality, joint selection by county/municipality, or selection by some other method. *Ex officio* positions on RIGO boards have no selection component. Some bylaws may offer these officeholders appointment powers for designees or alternates; however this authority is retained by the officeholder specifically, not the local government member more generally. Where selection is found, it is exercised overwhelmingly by county or by municipality and done so internally. On rarer occasions, municipalities may have external and unilateral selection authority for a member in a county delegation. The Southern Iowa Council of Governments clearly defines itself as a Type I (Counties Only) RIGO, referring to member delegations as "county boards." However, the counties are required to give appointment power to the mayor (or his/her designee) for the three largest municipalities in each county. Joint selection occurs when a county (or

counties) and their respective municipalities share in the selection process. This can happen as it does in the Wasatch Front Regional Council (Salt Lake City, UT). Here, each representative is nominated from the county councils of governments¹⁸, meaning that all the members (including the county and member municipalities) make these decisions cooperatively. Finally, selection can happen through some other method. In most cases, this involves relevant state actors including governors or state legislators. In the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (Appleton-Oshkosh), each county member has at least three representatives. For one of these representatives in each county, the County Board provides two names to the governor from which he/she selects the appointee. The governor has particularly strong roles on boards in Wisconsin and Florida.

3.2.4 Continuum of Membership for RIGOs from County- to Municipally-Dominant

The typology presented earlier uses membership to outline four generic categories within the continuum of RIGOs from county- to municipally-dominant, but there is much more nuance to this picture than a four-category structure initially paints. Membership, representation, and selection each play important roles in the sharing of decision-making authority among local governments. Creating something more granular than the four types is more methodologically problematic. Aggregating these ordinal concepts objectively into one value requires a level of knowledge of these governance structures that scholarship is unprepared to justify. However, I present the following three examples of how gradations can occur within a given board structure.

¹⁸ Miller and Nelles (2018) refer to cross-boundary organizations operating at a smaller footprint than the RIGOs simply as Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs).

Within membership, we could potentially see something that currently defies the four types when municipalities and *some* counties constitute the board. Within the sample, there were no examples of this, but this hypothetical is certainly plausible. Imagine a single-county RIGO where all the local governments are eligible members (making it a Type III). The board authorizes membership for an important municipality in the neighboring county, but not the county government itself. Now, we have all the eligible municipalities outlined in the bylaws, but the neighboring county is not an eligible member. This research evaluates eligible members regardless of whether these members are active participants or not; as a result, the questions I ask are more *de jure* than *de facto*. However, I am aware of at least two *de facto* cases of this phenomenon. The North Country Council serves the northernmost parts of New Hampshire across three counties: all of Coos, and parts of Carroll and Grafton. All three counties are eligible to be members, making this a Type III RIGO, but only Grafton currently has a representative on the board. A similar occurrence is found in the Mo-Kan Regional Council (St. Joseph, MO-KS); the municipalities of Brown County, Kansas have collective voting privileges on the board and the county government does not.

Representation also impacts how county- or municipally-dominant a RIGO board structure is. When a board is the purest form of Type I or Type IV, all the votes are allocated to either counties or municipalities. Within Type II RIGOs, there is some ratio of votes allocated to counties versus municipalities. In the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 14% of votes are allocated to municipalities (the independent city of Baltimore). In the Purchase Area Development District (Paducah, KY), 47% of the votes are allocated to municipalities. As a result, Baltimore Metropolitan Council is a more county-dominant RIGO than the Purchase Area Development District. It is unclear whether the classes of positions eligible for representation,

geographic constraints or minority representation requirements can be understood in the context of the county- to municipally-dominant spectrum, other than to say no constraints (with unilateral internal selection) would be preferable to any constraint.

The final characteristic, selection, affects this spectrum as well. Most municipalities or counties have full internal control over this aspect of board structure, when there is latitude. This is most easily portrayed within a Type I (Counties Only) RIGO. When counties have full internal selection authority, they are more county-dominant than those who share that authority with their respective municipalities. This was highlighted earlier with the Southern Iowa Council of Governments, where the mayors of the three largest cities could appoint members to the county delegation. This board is one of the least county-dominant Type I RIGOs found in the sample.

3.3 Chambers and Specialized Voting Rules within a RIGO

With representatives selected to serve on the board, this section outlines how RIGOs make decisions. This represents a crucial departure from previous empirical scholarship that has relied on rosters of representatives to a RIGO board. Without the governance documents a RIGO uses, research has masked the options and layers of decision-making authority and how membership, representation, and selection manifest within those layers. The division of responsibility and representation among those layers was the product of negotiation and consent through state legislation, internal to the RIGO members, or some combination of the two. To make assessments of disproportionality by evaluating a roster of the most inclusive chamber absent an understanding of the rules for decision-making has severe limitations in drawing valid conclusions and implications. This section outlines two common components of governance

documents that give local government members more tools than a simple "one member, one vote" structure would indicate: multiple chambers and specialized voting rules.

3.3.1 Multiple Chambers

In 83% of RIGOs, decision-making authority is divided between higher and lower chambers. There is no consistent naming convention across RIGOs; one RIGO's Board of Directors (lower chamber) is another's Executive Committee (higher chamber). I refer to them throughout based on their relative inclusivity and exclusivity¹⁹, but each is a comprehensive organizational body and not single-function or single-policy committees²⁰. In some cases, higher chambers consist of officers and/or at-large representatives elected directly from the lower chamber. In other cases, governance documents prescribe specific allocations of representation based on criteria that account for differences in geography, population, or forms of government. The West Florida Regional Council (Destin) Executive Committee has five seats: the elected Chair, elected Vice Chair, and three representatives from local governments other than those represented by the Chair and Vice Chair. Those three executive committee members must represent a member county, a member city, and a gubernatorial appointee. Allocations like these are no accident; this is a conscious strategy to ensure sustainable representation from key

¹⁹ In five circumstances, decision-making authority is split into three chambers. In these cases, I refer to the middle chamber as such.

²⁰ In some cases, a more exclusive chamber may take on additional "committee-like" roles, but is still considered the higher chamber. One such example is the Finance/Executive Committee of the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (Youngstown, OH).

players. Similarly, the decisions the more exclusive and more inclusive chambers are permitted to make are also ways in which boards can ensure sustainable representation.

3.3.2 Specialized Voting Rules

Within both more inclusive and more exclusive chambers, specialized voting rules may be put into place to account for differences in geography, population, or forms of government. In nearly all cases, these rules appear to give extra weight based primarily on population. How these processes balance population proportionality and the individual autonomy of their local governments varies widely, but I classify these concepts into two categories: multiple voting rules and multiple testing.

In some cases, governance documents outline multiple routes in which policy can be adopted by the board. When adoption requires only one of these paths, these are multiple voting rules. In some cases, these rules can be in place for certain kinds of decisions. The charter of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (Greenfield, MA) has a formula for allocating votes based on a combination of population and property assessments of each municipality, but this formula is only applied for decisions on appropriations. For all other votes, it follows a one-member, one-vote structure. In other RIGOs, members can request a vote under alternate rules. The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (Longview, WA) allows members to call for a vote under special rules that prescribe a specified number of votes per local government based on population²¹. If this rule is not exercised, the board also operates on a one-member, one-vote structure.

²¹ Special districts remain under one-member, one-vote.

In a few notable, but rare exceptions, local government members have agreed to multiple voting rules where policy must meet two differently calculated majorities to be adopted. In all four of the cases identified in the sample, these are major metropolitan areas (Detroit, Sacramento, Phoenix, and San Diego). All four of them require both a majority of members present and a majority of the populations they represent to adopt policy, however each of them operate slightly differently²².

Both the San Diego Association of Governments and Maricopa Association of Governments demonstrate the differences between a Process A and Process B region (see previous discussion in Chapter 2, also Pain & Taylor, 2007; Schafran, 2015). The San Diego Association of Governments (a single county, Process A RIGO) requires both a one-member, one-vote majority and a weighted vote majority. The representatives from the City and the County of San Diego must agree on how to divide their collective institutional and weighted votes. The weighted vote is based on the percentage population of each municipality, but ensures no individual member has more than 40% of the vote. Both this shared representation between city and county and a maximum vote percentage ensures that the primary city cannot unilaterally (or with a token coalition) dominate the agenda. The Maricopa Association of Governments (a Process B RIGO) similarly allows for its votes to be allocated weighted by population, but without the requirement that no member receive more than 40%. However, a single municipality dominating this RIGO is much less likely; Phoenix, Glendale, Scottsdale, and Mesa are all cities

²² The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments provides some voting rights to non-general purpose local governments in the region, mostly to special districts. They use a complex formula to apportion all these votes according to population. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments multiple testing policy will be discussed in great detail in Chapter 6.

of more than 200,000 people. As a result, the provision that limits the City of San Diego to 40% in the San Diego Association of Governments is not necessary here.

3.4 Using “A Grammar of Institutions” to Understand Governance Documents

RIGOs also institutionally align with Elinor Ostrom’s (1990) framework for institutions that oversee common property resources. Local government budgets are considered common property resources (Kavanagh et al., 2017); RIGO budgets are a logical extension of this concept with local government members in place of departments or agencies. Each of the eight traits Ostrom identifies is readily apparent within RIGO governance documents. As the local governments themselves oversee territory, the boundaries and membership are co-terminous. Except in a few limited cases where states completely prescribe them, RIGOs have a range from some amount to complete self-determination for their collective choice arrangements. In all cases, RIGOs operate with the consent of their respective states and the federal government. The RIGO’s administrative staff provides monitoring functions to ensure the will of the board is advanced. As a result of the administrative staff executing the board’s wishes, sanctions are rarely necessary. Finally, through the board’s direction and the staff’s effort, the organization ensures that disbursement rules and local conditions are aligned. When the federal government increases its aid (e.g. Obama’s 2009 stimulus package for “shovel-ready” projects), RIGOs responded to changes in their local conditions to take advantage of the opportunity.

This framework is divisible within the RIGO governance documents using Ostrom and Crawford’s (1995) components of rules: attributes, aims, deontics, conditions, and “or else.”

Table 2 provides examples of each component found in typical governance documents, upon which much of the coding methods is based:

Table 2 Components of Rules as Applied to RIGO Governance Documents

Component	Definition (Crawford & Ostrom, 1995)	Examples from Typical Governance Documents
Attribute	“a holder for any value of a participant-level variable that distinguishes to whom the institutional statement applies”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Purpose Local Governments • Representatives • Executive Committee
Aim	“a holder that describes particular actions or outcomes to which the deontic is assigned”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of Representatives for Quorum • Percent Constituting a Majority
Deontic	“a holder for the three modal verbs using deontic logic: may, must and must not”	<p>Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is entitled to” • “Shall” • “Cannot”
Conditions	“a holder for those variables which define when, where, how, and to what extent an aim is permitted, obligatory, or forbidden”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising Special Voting Rules • Population Thresholds for Number of Representatives
“Or Else”	“a holder for those variables which define the sanctions to be imposed for not following a rule”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to Adopt Policy • Failure to Receive Federal Funding • Failure to Hold a Legitimate Meeting (Quorum)

The clarity provided by Ostrom and Crawford's components of rules allows for content analysis to be done reliably without multiple coders. Unlike with other forms of text where subjective interpretation can lead to different results, these governance documents can be diagrammed reliably so long as the deontics are mandatory. Where governance documents use weaker deontics like "should" or "ought," those provisions are ignored in the coding process. As a result, there is minimal opportunity for variation in individual interpretation. The following section outlines how I coded governance documents to generate the summary statistics and other quantitative findings about RIGOs throughout the dissertation.

3.4.1 RIGO Characteristics Collected for Each Member

To make the aggregation and disaggregation of each unit of analysis more manageable, I collected some general information about each RIGO in the sample. The random sample was based on RIGOs, but the unit of analysis is each general-purpose local government member²³. I gave each RIGO a code consistent with its listing in the online Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS) database using state initials and a two-digit number. I also input the total RIGO population as listed in the CMS database, based on the 2010 Census²⁴. When available in the governance document, I recorded the year of most revisions or amendments. In many cases, the date of most recent bylaw amendments may not correspond to renegotiated governance

²³ As a result, this is a cluster sampling method. Valid inferences can be drawn about the population of RIGOs, but not for individual local governments.

²⁴ When I had each RIGO's eligible local government members' populations, I further validated this number.

outcomes. However, this is an easily acquirable data point for how "living" the documents are. I also recorded whether the RIGO utilizes multiple testing in any of its chambers.

When a RIGO has multiple chambers for decision-making, I selected the chamber with the most specifications for representation based on geographic, demographic or political structure criteria. To uniformly choose the higher or lower chamber could miss specific provisions negotiated and included to protect certain members' interests. The same would hold true for choosing chambers based on certain functions, such as appropriations, or Transportation Improvement Program and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy approval. A local government may want to protect its voice in a higher chamber to set the agenda or to develop the budget or planning document. Using a rule that evaluates the chambers based on geographic, demographic or political structure criteria for representation ensures I capture the maximum amount of this variation. In all but one instance in the sample, determining which chamber had the most specifications was obvious on its face. The only exception to this is the Capital Area Council of Governments (Austin, TX). The RIGO's general assembly provides counties and municipalities with additional representatives based on a formula for population; the executive committee names specific representational rights for each county, the City of Austin, and collective representational rights for small, medium, and large cities (excluding Austin). The executive committee was chosen because it named specific representational rights rather than rely solely on a formula. I also recorded how many chambers the RIGO has in total and which combination of counties and municipalities are eligible for membership in its most inclusive chamber, based on the Type I-IV classification described earlier in this chapter.

3.4.2 Membership, Representation, and Selection Characteristics Collected for Each Eligible General Purpose Local Government

Based on the eligible membership for the selected chamber, I used a 2010 Census list of all county and sub-county governments to include all potential members with singular or collective voting rights. For jurisdictions with individual voting rights, I collected and recorded the five-digit FIPS codes for counties and ten-digit FIPS codes for sub-county governments and their 2010 Census populations.²⁵ These FIPS codes allow for additional information the Census Bureau has collected to be merged easily as new research questions emerge. I recorded their state to readily identify when a RIGO crossed state borders. Unlike the CMS database, municipalities and counties with membership in multiple RIGOs are not classified by a primary or secondary affiliation. Twelve counties and eight municipalities are members of more than one RIGO in the sample. Jurisdictions with collective voting rights are coded under a separate multijurisdictional membership binary variable; I recorded 2010 Census populations for multijurisdictional county members.

I coded local government members' (either individual or multijurisdictional) representation in ways that easily allow for standardization, despite the vast variation in representation schemes. In two separate variables, I coded for the number of seats and votes to which each member is entitled. This allows for easily summation by RIGO to determine percentages while maintaining the integrity of the original data. I also recorded the fewest number of votes in the bylaws to which a local government was prescribed. This is important for

²⁵ I also dissociated these ten-digit FIPS codes and concatenated into seven-digit FIPS codes to omit single municipalities that span multiple counties.

the formula I use to calculate each RIGO's Institutional Membership Score (results in Chapter 4). For RIGOs with dual testing, I standardized each member's votes based on the average percentage for each test. For example, if a municipality was 10% of the membership vote and 20% of the population vote, this would average to 15%. This is an imperfect approximation, but creating a separate binary variable to identify dual testing RIGOs allows for easy exclusion, when necessary. I coded geographic, special district, and minority representation requirements as dichotomous for members where that was a requirement.

Constraints on who may represent members are coded across ten categories as percentages so that original values can be regenerated. The ten categories are as follows: (1 & 2) *ex officio* representatives that are elected officials of municipalities or counties; (3, 4, & 5) representatives required to be elected officials (but not one specific officeholder) that could hold office in a municipality or in a county; or there could be latitude to choose a county or municipal elected official; (6) professional staff members such as a town manager or engineer named to serve as a representative to a RIGO board (either *ex officio* or as a class of position); (7) a member may have the flexibility to choose any elected official or professional staff from within its jurisdiction; (8) bylaws may prescribe that a certain percentage or number of representatives be citizens not holding elected office or professional positions within the jurisdiction; (9) any other required representation constraining a member's choices; and (10) no constraints on representation. By collecting this information in percentage form, these values easily can be averaged to generate the constraints on local government members in the sample or multiplied by the total number of seats to identify the original values.

I coded selection constraints similarly to representation using percentages to easily average or regenerate original values. *Ex officio* representatives are not selected, but these values

are carried over from the representative section to ensure totals equaled 100%. Selection can occur four ways: (1) by county (or counties), (2) by municipality (or municipalities), (3) by a joint process of counties and municipalities, or (4) through some other actor (usually a governor or state legislators). This method also allows me to identify cross-over selections (e.g. where municipalities select representatives for a county delegation or vice versa) by comparing the codes for county or municipality of the member with the percentages provided in these categories.

3.5 Analysis of Coding Scheme

This coding scheme generates a comprehensive and granular approach to understanding RIGO governance documents. Prior research has either used the cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations as the unit of analysis (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Wyman, 1994) or compared the center city's representation rights to the organization writ large (Benjamin, Kincaid, & McDowell, 1994). This research has been done primarily through surveys or imputing from rosters. These new methods rely on the original governance documents that reduce interpretation. The coding scheme makes each local government member the unit of analysis and this information then is aggregated up through cluster sampling. As a result, the aggregate values generated for each RIGO reflect the variation of each region more completely. The role of center cities as "great powers" can still be explored using this dataset, but with a much richer context for the region as a whole.

These new methods for accounting for membership, representation, and selection allow for a new set of questions to be asked about when and how counties and municipalities arrange

their representational rights. The spectrum from municipally-dominant to county-dominant (and Types I-IV) introduced in this chapter demonstrates that there is substantial variation in which forms of local governments are permitted membership in a RIGO. How many representatives a member is entitled to seat, the constraints on who those representatives may be, and who has say in the selection process all give insight into the roles and relationships between and amongst municipalities and counties.

Finally, these methods code the chamber or voting rules where the region itself has intentionally sought the most balance in demographic or population criteria. RIGOs provide executive committees and general assemblies with different powers and authorities. Relying on the most inclusive chamber, as much of the prior research has (Gerber & Gibson, 2009; Sanchez, 2006; Wyman, 1994), does not identify chambers with a consistent set of powers. These methods do not remedy this concern, but this coding scheme does identify where the region's local governments prioritize the most specific criteria for representation. Similarly, voting rules that balance demographic or population criteria may be rarely exercised in practice. However, the presence of these rules in governance documents may alter the policy recommendation and funding allocation proposals to garner consensus.

3.6 Limitations of Coding Scheme

While I am confident that the methods outlined in this chapter mitigates many of the methodological concerns outlined in Chapter 2, I have identified a few limitations. By relying on governing documents rather than rosters, I provide a much more complete picture of the formal roles and powers local governments have at their disposal within RIGOs than previous research.

However, there are a few identifiable blind spots that result from these methods. I outline three in this section: the inclusion of non-participants, informal governance, and anachronisms between bylaw updates and population totals. These limitations are the natural outcomes of my intentional choices to create rigor and consistency across inconsistent processes.

I chose to include all eligible members within the geographic region to evaluate board structure, including some non-participants. First, a local government that chooses to exit or not participate in a RIGO may not be related to the governance of the board. These could include: member dues that local governments may wish not to pay, the local governments may have contentious relationships with neighbors, or have a voter base that prioritizes self-reliance. Non-participation also presents in a few different, hard to quantify ways. Most obviously, it could be the absence of membership; not signing onto the founding documents or paying dues would be examples of this. However, non-participation could be more subtle, including frequent absenteeism from meetings or unconditional obstruction. These actions would not be reflected in a set of bylaws and may be a result of the choice in representative more than the feelings of the local government. Governance documents reflect the rules for playing the game, regardless of who chooses to play. An understanding of the full impact of how municipalities and counties share power across all eligible members may help identify when non-participation is more likely to occur because of the governance structures. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 4. Non-participation is a politically sensitive topic for RIGOs. While this research assists in our understanding of this tactic, more research is needed to fully understand causes for its occurrences.

While governance documents represent the formal requirements and powers for members, the practice of decision-making may not always align. Boards may develop norms and

customs that augment or alter its practices without codifying them. The extent to which a board tables actions to seek out stronger consensus above and beyond than the simple required majority is one such example. Another informal governance practice may be unwritten expectations placed on representation in more exclusive chambers. One hypothetical involves an executive committee consisting of four officers and two at-large representatives with no geographic, demographic or political criteria. In an eight-county RIGO, the most populous county may continuously hold a seat on the executive committee longer than expected, purely because of a custom or norm or because the county has the collective voting power within the inclusive chamber to ensure it²⁶. These concepts are not accounted for explicitly in the governance documents, and thus are not components of the research. Informal governance is another aspect of RIGOs where scholarship is opaque at best. Once again, we can look to colleagues like Randall Stone (2013) for models of how members act informally within International Organizations.

Finally, there are some mild population anachronisms within the research. Throughout the research, 2010 Decennial Census populations were used for local government members and aggregated up to generate total RIGO populations. However, some RIGOs (and states) prescribe alternate sources or time frames to be used when tabulating local government representative seats or votes. Several RIGOs in Virginia are required to use population estimates from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. In instances where sources other than the 2010 Census were prescribed for tabulation, representative and vote totals were compared with current rosters and mandated sources to ensure accuracy. As these

²⁶ The converse could also be true where the smallest county holds a seat less often than expected because of custom or lack of voting power in the inclusive chamber.

documents were collected in 2017, there also may be some slight population shifts reflected in amendments to bylaws but not in populations. For example, two of the fastest growing RIGOs in the United States are the Lewis & Clark Regional Development Council (Bismarck, ND) and the Souris Basin Planning Council (Minot, ND). Both of these RIGOs updated bylaws in 2014; any changes to representation based on shifts in population since 2010 would remain unaccounted. However, the database includes five-digit ANSI county codes and seven- and ten-digit ANSI municipal codes. Therefore, the database can be merged with any other national population source following these standards for easy updating.

This section has outlined the methods I have used to acquire and code bylaws and governance documents from 150 RIGOs. I have provided definitions for membership, representation, and selection to assist the reader and future researchers in distinguishing among highly interrelated concepts. Based on these definitions, I have outlined a spectrum of RIGOs from county-dominant to municipally-dominant within which there are four broad types. I have chosen to code the chambers and voting rules with the most variation on representation criteria such as population, geography or political structure. This decision was made because it finds the ways in which local governments have negotiated most visibly to protect their interests, either for decision-making or agenda-setting purposes. The database built from the coding of these bylaws is both a substantial upgrade from previous research and highly adaptive to future research questions.

3.7 Methods for Profiles of the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council and Sacramento Area Council of Governments

The profiles presented in Chapter 5 explore alternative uses for the quantitative methods developed in Chapter 4. The Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC) chapter evaluates the region's proposed collective choice arrangements at the inception of their organization. The profile of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) examines how changes in demographics and political structures over time can affect collective choice arrangements. These two profiles demonstrate that demographics and political structures are considered as part of the decision-making process for collective choice arrangements.

The selection of SMPC is based on its relatively recent formation and the insights of a genesis story. SMPC's current incarnation was formed in 2012 and much of the documentation from those initial meetings was readily available. The RIGO is relatively near the average in its IMS and PPS values (see Figure 5); thus, this example would be considered typical (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). As a result, this chapter explores the origins of the board structure to show that demographics and political structure are considered as part of a RIGO's collective choice arrangements.

SACOG currently has a unique set of collective choice arrangements among RIGOs in the sample that explicitly accounts for demographics and political structures. This region experienced a population boom from 1960-2010 that had two major relevant impacts to SACOG's collective choice arrangements: (1) fluctuations in the disparity among local government populations and (2) the incorporation of several new municipalities. SACOG now uses a triple-testing method to adopt policy that requires majorities of municipalities, counties, and population. As a result, SACOG sits apart the upper-right corner of Figure 5 apart from most

other RIGOs. This innovative governance structure makes it a deviant example (Seawright & Gerring, 2008), in this case to demonstrate an extreme example of strong population proportionality and strong institutional membership. This profile quantifies changes in the environment and SACOG's adaptation of its collective choice arrangements.

These profiles are triangulated from a variety of sources internal and external to the organization. SMPC and SACOG each provided historical records of meeting minutes and related documentation that informed the decision. This documentation was supplemented by external media reports, policy papers, census data, and additional publicly available materials. I also conducted interviews with elected and appointed officials from both SMPC and SACOG. These elite interviews were conducted primarily to “corroborate what has been established from other sources” (Tansey, 2007, pg. 766).

These interviews are exempt under IRB requirements (45 CFR 46.101(b)) both because they involve elected and appointed officials operating in this capacity (see 3.i) and the research project was approved by the RIGO executive director to examine a public program (see 5.i-iv). For the interviews, I prioritized the candor and comfort of the participants. Extensive notes were taken during each interview, but subjects were not recorded. Two interviews were conducted in person, one respondent replied to questions by email, and all others were conducted by telephone. The information provided by respondents is stored online with password protection. In-person and telephone respondents verbally consented to giving information to me as background; the e-mail respondent was informed of this by e-mail. When I use quotations with attribution or anecdotes that include easily identifiable information, I received their permission prior to publication.

Chapter 5 makes narrow claims and has substantial limitations in generalizability. Cases were selected on the IMS and PPS scores (of Figure 5) to demonstrate different applications the methods used. These profiles are not intended to be compared with one another or identify causal mechanisms. Governance documents are the product of a multitude of macro-level factors like state legislation or the policy areas a region's local governments undertakes; but it is also the product of individual factors like the negotiation skills of representatives. Explicating all these factors, their interactions among one another, and their impact on the governance documents is beyond the scope of this research question. For the above reasons, I eschew the term case study, particularly in the Yin (2014) usage. I refer to these as profiles to reflect their limited explanatory power and generalizability.

3.8 Conclusion

Taken in totality, these methods provide a pathway to a new set of initial insights into the national picture, the origin story, and the adaptation of RIGO collective choice arrangements. Creating the compendium of existing operating governance documents from RIGOs across the country is a substantial contribution on its own, as it now allows for a wealth of exciting research beyond the research in this dissertation. The bylaws and other governance documents themselves provide some of the most unambiguous records of how RIGOs are to operate.

I code these governance documents using the local government member as the unit of analysis to create a composite picture of the RIGO. This shift in methods alone shows how varied and complex collective choice arrangements are. Membership is far from uniform, with RIGOs providing membership to municipalities and counties in a variety of combinations and

forms. RIGOs also may have multiple chambers or specialized voting rules written into their governance documents. Furthermore, the selection process for representatives is not always solely at the discretion of the member local government. As a result, my evaluation of the “one-member, one-vote” conventional wisdom provides more specification than has been done to date.

The profiles of Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC) and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) use multiple methods including document analysis, census data and elite interviews to apply the concepts presented. The SMPC profile demonstrates how the definitions presented in this chapter and the formulas presented in Chapter 4 can be applied to compare collective choice arrangement proposals. The SACOG profile shows how these definitions and methods can be applied across time to show adaptation to the environment in which RIGOs operate. These are limited, precise questions intended to demonstrate the additional value of the methods presented in the dissertation.

4.0 Quantitative Findings

In this chapter, I demonstrate that much of the literature has mischaracterized cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations as overly structured as one-member, one-vote organizations. The findings presented here show that relatively few RIGOs are so structured; furthermore, the overwhelming majority of RIGOs make intentional efforts to balance population proportionality to at least some degree. I introduce a formula for calculating institutional membership and modify an existing formula to better measure population proportionality in RIGOs. I build a two-dimensional scatterplot that contrasts institutional membership to population proportionality that more clearly represents these board structures. In addition to looking at the sample in the whole, I evaluate those RIGOs containing cities of more than 200,000 people (“great powers”) to determine if large cities are fundamentally different from the overall population. Finally, I analyze constraints on who can represent local governments and who can select these representatives in the context of its implications for the regional governance literature.

4.1 Building a Two-Dimensional View of RIGOs

Unlike the previous scholarship on cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations, my research evaluates RIGOs' board structures on two variables simultaneously: institutional membership and population proportionality. The prior literature has almost exclusively only

focused on one variable to measure their structure: the extent to which boards are one-member, one-vote (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Benjamin, Kincaid, & McDowell, 1994; Hall, 2009; Mogulof, 1971; Wyman, 1994; Zimmermann, 2011) or their population proportionality (Lewis & Sprague, 1997). By coding original governance documents by general-purpose local government and collecting their populations, I can develop a much more comprehensive picture of how governance documents provide representational rights to local government members. This section introduces a new formula for calculating the Institutional Membership Score (IMS) for any cross-boundary intergovernmental organization. Furthermore, it modifies the Taagepera & Shugart (1989) Deviation Index (D) to conform to a nationwide application; this is referred to as the Population Proportionality Score (PPS). Finally, the results of both the IMS and PPS are plotted to demonstrate the tremendous variation. This visual representation simultaneously reflects two crucial ways international organizations are perceived to provide representational rights: institutional membership (one-member, one-vote) and population proportionality (Kirsch & Langner, 2011; Posner & Sykes, 2014; Woodward, 2007). Two major findings emerge from this scatter plot: (1) the presence of one-member, one-vote of RIGOs is vastly overestimated in the academic literature, and (2) being one-member, one-vote can mean vastly different levels of population proportionality.

4.1.1 Institutional Membership Score (IMS)

The Institutional Membership Score (IMS) is a way of measuring the extent to which a RIGO honors the autonomy of its local governments and gives them decision-making authority as a function of its membership on the board. It is calculated by taking the lowest number of votes provided to any general-purpose local government, multiplied by the number of those local

government members; then that number is divided by the total number of votes of all the general-purpose local governments²⁷. As a result, the IMS falls between zero and one. A score of one indicates that all the members are entitled to an equal number of votes²⁸; a score of zero is impossible but represents a useful abstract terminus. Figure 3 displays the formula for IMS:

$$\frac{(\textit{Fewest Votes for Any One Member}) * (\textit{Number of Total Members})}{\textit{Total Votes in RIGO}}$$

Figure 3 Formula for Institutional Membership Score

Throughout the 143 RIGOs sampled with complete governance information, the mean IMS was 0.793²⁹. Only 60 RIGOs (41.96%) had perfect scores of 1. Using a 90% Bernoulli confidence interval, we can estimate that only 35.2-48.8% of RIGOs throughout the United

²⁷ When a RIGO's bylaws require multiple majorities based on both institutional membership and population to ratify policy, the IMS is coded as 1. Multi-jurisdictional members are treated collectively, not individually.

²⁸ This may or may not mean that all the local governments in that region are entitled to an equal number of votes. For example, a RIGO may provide collective representational rights to multiple jurisdictions. As a result, the member may receive an equal number of votes but may be representing multiple local governments.

²⁹ RIGOs that require multiple majorities were removed to be consistent with the survey methods of the other authors in Table 3.

States have perfect one-member, one-vote structures³⁰. Table 3 compares the previous survey-based scholarship of similar regional bodies to this research:

Table 3 ACIR, Wyman, and Rickabaugh Results

Author	Year	Population Studied	% of Bodies with 1-Member, 1-Vote	Method
ACIR	1973	Regional Councils	50	Survey
Wyman	1994	Regional Councils	60	Survey
Rickabaugh	2018	RIGOs	41.96%	Coded Governance Documents

This is an important contribution to the literature, even though the magnitude is not particularly striking. Its importance lies in our improved definition of membership that recognizes all local governments within a region may not be eligible for membership, membership can be multijurisdictional, and that RIGOs may provide representational rights differently depending on voting rules or chambers. Furthermore, unlike ACIR and Wyman, my research uses the most current governance documents, rather than surveys. As a result, there are no biases in the self-reporting of data.

Therefore, measuring how close a RIGO’s collective choice arrangements are to “one-member, one-vote” (through a measure like the IMS) is not sufficient by itself to express the ways in which general-purpose local governments have apportioned decision-making authority amongst themselves. A region in which all the counties have roughly the same population can operate on a one-member, one-vote basis without needing to worry about disproportionality concerns of members. However, most regions have local governments with significantly more

³⁰ Including the RIGOs that require multiple majorities increase the percentage of one-member, one-vote bodies to 43.92%. The 90% Bernoulli confidence interval is then from 37.2-50.6%.

disparity in population. Hence, I present a second measure to best represent the fundamental tensions in collective choice arrangements.

4.1.2 Population Proportionality Score (PPS)

The Population Proportionality Score (PPS) makes some minor revisions to Taagepera & Shugart's (1989) Deviation Index (D) so it conforms more directly to a national survey of regional councils and aligns logically with the IMS for logical visualization. The original formula for D is:

$$D = \frac{1}{2} \sum |s_i - p_i|$$

Figure 4 Taagepera & Shugart's Deviation Index (1989)

The Deviation Index aggregates the absolute difference between the percentage of seats on the board and the percentage of population within the organization. The resulting values all fall between zero and one. In the original Deviation Index, one indicated perfect *disproportionality* and zero indicated perfect *proportionality*.

The PPS makes two major modifications to the Deviation Index as applied to cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations³¹. Unlike Lewis & Sprague's (1997) application to

³¹ When a RIGO's bylaws require multiple majorities based on both institutional membership and population to ratify policy, the PPS is also coded as 1.

MPOs in California, those organizations were either single county bodies with only municipal members (see: San Diego or Kern [Bakersfield] Counties) or they were multiple county bodies with only counties as members (see: Los Angeles region or Bay Area region). As a result, they did not need to concern themselves with the issue of nested representation when municipalities and their respective counties are simultaneously provided membership. However, in a national survey of RIGOs this nested membership concern is quite common. Barbour (2015) nests municipalities within the counties to which they belong in her evaluation of MPOs. Because one of the major purposes of the research is to evaluate the effects on center cities, this method cannot be used. Furthermore, the difference between a county and municipalities' powers and interests likely leads to different objectives within a RIGO agenda. As a result, the PPS formula intentionally double counts these populations. The other modification to Taagepera and Shugart's D in the PPS is that it is reflected. Therefore, this makes a perfect PPS of one reflective of a RIGO that is entirely population proportional (one-person, one-vote). Just like with the IMS, a score of zero is also impossible but is still a useful abstract terminus for conceptual purposes.

Among the RIGOs randomly sampled, the mean PPS was .643³². The only RIGOs with perfect PPS scores of one were those that use dual testing procedures. However, 76 RIGOs have scores of .66 or higher, indicating that these bodies do pay strong attention to population proportionality. However just as before, PPS alone is also not sufficient to best understand these

³² This value *does* include RIGOs where multiple majorities are required to ratify policy, since there was no prior consistent survey to reflect this variable. While the IMS can be interpreted as a percentage of seats on a board provided through institutional membership, the formula for PPS is different and cannot be interpreted as a percentage.

bodies' collective choice arrangements. Plotting both the IMS and PPS together gives a much stronger overall perspective than either does individually.

4.1.3 Visually Combining IMS and PPS

Figure 5 shows how RIGO board structures can be best understood by combining the IMS and PPS. The scatterplot shows a fairly strong diagonal line above which RIGOs all have structured their boards according to institutional membership, population proportionality, or some combination of both. The absence of RIGOs in the lower-left quadrant is also a strong indication that these two variables together explain much of the variation in these collective choice arrangements. This is confirmed by much of the language included in many governance documents that prescribes additional votes above given population thresholds, collective representation for smaller local governments, or provides for a mandatory minimum number of votes for any member. Furthermore, this scatterplot is consistent with the ways in which International Organizations such as the European Union have structured their voting rules to reflect both the sovereignty of national governments and the relative population differences under the Treaty of Lisbon. These appear to be two key components that explain how votes are apportioned³³.

³³ The only notable exception to this within the random sample is the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (Greenfield, MA) described in Chapter 3 that uses a combination of institutional membership, population and total assessed value of the municipalities to weight voting on questions of appropriations.



Figure 5 IMS and PPS Results for 150 RIGOs in Sample (Coded by Type)

The scatterplot also has been color coded to identify patterns among membership types as outlined in Chapter 3. Type IV RIGOs (Municipalities Only) strongly tend towards high IMS scores, regardless of their PPS. These RIGOs are concentrated in states where counties have the weakest powers (three New England states and Alaska) and largely are operating in regions

where population disparities are minimal. Type I and Type III RIGOs do not have any substantial trend by visual inspection.

Type II RIGOs appear to have lower IMS scores, regardless of their PPS. Given that these RIGOs permit some municipalities to be members but not all, these regions are more likely to have at least one large municipality relative to the total population of the RIGO. I discuss large cities (in the absolute sense) in detail later in the chapter, but the size of local governments is important relative to the total population as well. The Black Hills Council of Governments (BHCOG) in South Dakota serves just over 180,000 citizens; Rapid City is more than six times larger than the next largest municipality in the region. Rapid City's county (Pennington) has more than half the RIGO population. BHCOG is a Type II RIGO: all counties are members, but municipalities must have a population of more than 1,000 to be eligible. Both municipal and county members are entitled to one representative and an additional representative for every additional 10,000 in population. As a result, Pennington County and Rapid City collectively hold eighteen of the forty-three seats on the BHCOG board. Harding County has no municipalities above 1,000 people, and as a result, only has one representative. BHCOG has an IMS of .488.

The upper-left quadrant is composed of RIGOs with strong Institutional Membership Scores and weak Population Proportionality Scores. The Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development Area in southern central Montana provides each local government member (five counties and 12 incorporated municipalities, Type III) with one representative to its Board of Directors. Despite not being a large RIGO by population (2010 population: 183,683), this region also has substantial disparities among members' population. The city of Billings comprises 56.7% of the membership's population; Yellowstone County (which includes Billings) comprises more than 80% of the membership's population. Meanwhile, Sweet Grass County

receives an equal number of representatives to the board with less than 2% of the population, as does its county seat, Big Timber, with less than 1% of the population. This organization appears to typify the concerns of scholars who worry about the under-representation of cities at the expense of suburban and rural concerns, but that takes too narrow a view. The organization has self-identified as being concerned with more than just development; it also focuses on protecting natural resources, most of which are found in less urban areas. Thus, this RIGO's one-member, one-vote structure may reflect a different kind of balance between urban, suburban, and rural areas because of its mission.

The lower-right quadrant is composed of RIGOs with weak Institutional Membership Scores and strong Population Proportionality Scores. The Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization serves the Akron-Canton area. Each county is entitled to four representatives, with an additional three representatives for each 100,000 or fraction thereof. The largest municipality in each county is entitled to one representative; but if a municipality has more than 100,000 people, they follow the guidelines of counties. As a result, the cities of Wooster, Canton, and Kent (all under 100,000 people) each have one representative out of the total 40 local government representatives. Meanwhile, the city of Akron (2010 population: 199,110) has seven representatives. Summit County (including Akron) has more than 500,000 people, meaning it has 16 of the 40 representatives (plus Akron's seven, meaning they have a majority). As a result of these additional thresholds for representation, the population proportionality is quite strong at .739. Because the smaller cities are entitled to one representative each and there are eight total members (four counties and their largest cities), the IMS is calculated at .2 [$.2 = ((1*8)/40)$].

The upper-right quadrant is composed of RIGOs with both strong Institutional Membership Scores and Population Proportionality Scores. The Rockingham Planning Commission serves twenty-seven municipalities and Rockingham County in southeastern New Hampshire. This region includes many of the northern suburbs in the Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metropolitan Statistical Area. Under New Hampshire state law, each municipality is entitled to two representatives regardless of size. Three representatives are provided for municipalities between 10,000-25,000 and four representatives for municipalities above 25,000 (NH Rev Stat § 36:48 (2015)). As of the 2010 Census, the region has one city of more than 25,000; Salem had 28,776 people at that time. Four cities had populations between 10,000-25,000 (Exeter, Hampton, Portsmouth, and Raymond). As a result, representation here results in strong scores on both the IMS (.903) and the PPS (.753).

This same state law has dramatically different impacts throughout the state, based on the way boundaries are drawn and the distribution of populations. Table 4 demonstrates this for the four New Hampshire RIGOs included in the random sample.

Table 4 New Hampshire RIGOs in Random Sample

RIGO Name	# of Munis	Largest Muni	Largest Muni Population	# of Counties	IMS	PPS
Rockingham	27	Salem	28,776	1	.903	.753
Central NH	20	Concord	42,695	2	.957	.703
Southern NH	15	Manchester	109,565	3	.783	.689
North Country	51	Conway	10,115	3	.982	.366

The Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission is similar to Rockingham; the IMS is higher because there are fewer overall members and Concord is the only member entitled to more than two representatives. Concord has more people than Salem but is still only entitled to the maximum of four representatives; therefore that region is more population disproportional than Rockingham. Southern New Hampshire sees a substantial drop in IMS because eight of the fifteen members are entitled to three or more representatives (Manchester and its suburbs). Despite providing more representatives to municipalities with higher populations, the PPS is lower than the prior two RIGOs. This is in part because Manchester has nearly 40% of the region's population but less than 10% of the votes on the planning commission. The boundaries of the Southern New Hampshire RPC are drawn quite tightly, but the opposite is true in the North Country Council. This heavily rural region of the state includes three counties and more than fifty municipalities. Only two municipalities are entitled to more than two representatives, leading to the most heavily one-member, one-vote structure. Twenty-seven municipalities in this region have less than 1,000 people. These municipalities have the same representation as municipalities with 5,000-10,000 people, despite having at least five times lower population. In summary, the New Hampshire state law enforces a consistent governance selection process across all of its Regional Planning Commissions, but the drawing of those boundaries and the population disparities result in drastically different structures for decision-making.

4.2 RIGOs Containing Large Cities

While the previous section focused on RIGOs overall, Chapter 2 discusses extensively the concerns scholars have expressed about the decision-making authority provided to urban areas on boards in cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations like RIGOs. These scholars believe urban areas are under-represented on these boards, echoing the previously-discounted "one-member, one-vote" myth. However, it remains possible that RIGOs with large cities could be significantly different from RIGOs writ large. To test these ideas, I restrict the original random sample to just those RIGOs with at least one city with a 2010 Census Population of at least 200,000. Twenty-seven RIGOs met these criteria. The resulting scatterplot of IMS and PPS scores is shown in Figure 6:

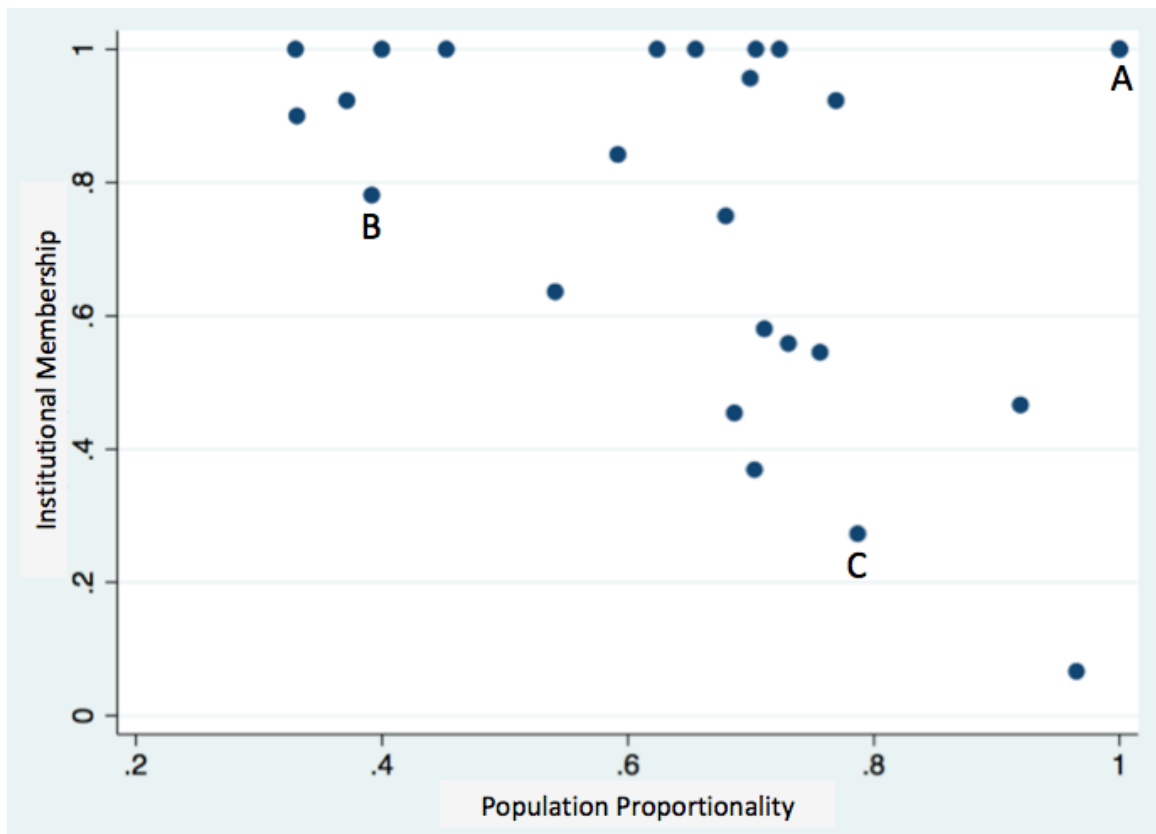


Figure 6 RIGOs Containing Large Cities Plotted by IMS and PPS

A visual inspection of the scatter plot shows a roughly similar distribution of RIGOs to the overall population across both the IMS and PPS variables. The mean IMS for RIGOs with a large city is .779, compared to a mean IMS for RIGOs without a large city at .804. The mean PPS score for RIGOs with a large city is .686, compared to a mean PPS score for RIGOs without a large city at .634. These variables do not meet the normality assumption required to run a t-test to show differences between the RIGOs with and without large cities. They skew negative, which is logical considering zero is an unachievable abstract concept and one represents perfect representation (either by population or by membership). However, the standard deviation for each of these variables is quite substantial. This is a strong indication that RIGOs with large cities and without large cities are not fundamentally different from one another in the way they allocate voting privileges. However, given the strong focus of the literature on the under-representation of large cities, the following section outlines some key features of the randomly selected RIGOs with large cities.

As noted by Marker A, all four RIGOs with multiple testing voting rules in the original random sample contain cities of at least 200,000 people (San Diego/Chula Vista, Detroit, Sacramento, and Phoenix/Chandler/Scottsdale/Mesa). This is one clear indication that large cities have found creative ways to develop collective choice arrangements that balance the needs of urban cities and counties with smaller, suburban, or rural areas within the same region. Each of these RIGOs calculates their respective multiple majorities differently. Thus, if there has been policy diffusion with these methods, it has been adapted to meet each local context.

Marker B points out the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (Fort Wayne); here state law provides more representation based on population but, counter to

intuition, it does not lead to a high PPS. This RIGO has a high IMS of .781, and a PPS of .392. As a result, it is in the quadrant over which scholars like Hall (2009, see quote on page 4) have expressed concern. This RIGO has four counties is structured as a Type II (Counties and Some Municipalities). Indiana state law (IC 36-7-7-4 [2016]) has prescribed a consistent board structure for all its Regional Planning Commissions that provides more representation based on population. While Indiana state law provides for additional representatives for counties with more than 50,000 people, it provides for representatives from more cities and minimally provides for multiple representatives from the largest cities. As a result, Fort Wayne (2010 population: 253,691) has two representatives; meanwhile, Zanesville (2010 population: 600) is entitled to a representative. Additionally, Fort Wayne's county, Allen County, is entitled to one additional representative because it meets the population threshold. The two local governments combined (Fort Wayne and Allen County) comprise 15.6% of the board. The remaining three counties comprise 22.7% of the population and hold 65.6% of the 42 seats³⁴. For scholars who care about more population proportional representation, this represents a cautionary tale to ensure that thresholds are designed to promote more representation of larger cities, not just more representation of municipalities based on population.

Marker C identifies Virginia's Richmond Regional Planning District Commission in the lower-right quadrant where population thresholds do lead to higher PPS. Virginia's political structure is unique, relative to most other state environments for RIGOs, because it allows for some cities to operate independently of counties³⁵ and the strong role of counties. In the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, a municipality must have a population of at

³⁴ Six additional municipalities within Allen County make up the remaining 18.8% difference.

³⁵ Only two other cases are present in the random sample: Baltimore and St. Louis.

least 3,501 to be eligible for membership. This is a Type II RIGO, because counties represent the unincorporated areas and municipalities with 3,500 or fewer people (not because of the special status of independent cities). Many RIGOs in Virginia have developed population thresholds to determine the number of representatives to which each local government is entitled. Most, including Richmond's RIGO, divide their representatives between elected officials and citizens appointed by the local government. Having a minimum population requirement for membership combined with thresholds for additional representation are fundamental reasons why this RIGO is in the lower-right quadrant. Figure 7 is a reprinting of Section 2 of the Richmond Regional Planning District's charter that describes how this functions:

Section 2				
Governmental subdivisions which are parties to this Charter Agreement shall appoint members to the COMMISSION on the following basis:				
<u>Number and Type of Membership</u>				
<u>Population</u>	<u>Governing Body</u>	<u>Planning Commission</u>	<u>Citizen</u>	
3,501 - 7,500	1	-	-	
7,501 - 25,000	1	1	-	
25,001 - 50,000	2	1	-	
50,001 - 100,000	2	1	1	
100,001 - 175,000	3	1	1	
175,001 - 250,000	4	1	1	
250,001 - and up	5	1	1	
For purposes of defining population of a jurisdiction under the terms of this Section, the numbers to be used will be the latest of the official U.S. Census count or the most recent preliminary population estimate prepared by the Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.				

Figure 7 Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Representation Thresholds³⁶

³⁶ Original document reprinted from "Charter Agreement of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission", 1990, available at: http://www.richmondregional.org/Publications/PDC/RRPDC_Charter.pdf

Single-county RIGOs with large cities retain high IMS across the board, but vary substantially on PPS. Kern Council of Governments (Bakersfield, CA) and Pima Association of Governments (Tucson, AZ) are both single-county RIGOs in the upper-left quadrant. Meanwhile, the Capital Regional Planning Commission (Madison, WI) and the San Diego Association of Governments are also single-county RIGOs with strong population proportionality. Because single county RIGOs are constituted primarily by municipalities³⁷, the diversity between municipalities is usually more pronounced. There are no other counties to rival the large city in size. Table 5 highlights the difference in single county RIGOs:

Table 5 Single County RIGOs Containing Large Cities

RIGO	Largest City	Largest City % of RIGO Population	IMS	PPS
Capital Area Regional Planning Commission	Madison, WI	47.78%	.923	.769
Kern Council of Governments	Bakersfield, CA	41.39%	.923	.371
Pima Association of Governments	Tucson, AZ	53.06%	1.000	.400
San Diego Association of Governments	San Diego, CA	42.24%	1.000	1.000

The findings of single-county RIGOs in their collective choice arrangements are simple examples of why we see a balance between institutional membership and population proportionality. This balance often leaves large cities short of a one-person, one-vote

³⁷ Most single-county RIGOs have county representation on the board in a de facto at-large capacity.

membership structure. But these single-county RIGOs demonstrate why that is not a reasonable expectation. If a large city or county holds a majority or near majority of the population, it can easily dominate the agenda. Scholars like Hall (2009) and Orfield & Dawes (2016) may feel the urban areas should dominate the agenda, but this is not a recipe for a sustainable *regional* voice over the long term. This pattern is consistent with what we see in international organizations. Germany and France have relinquished power within the European Union to ensure that smaller countries have a significant enough voice to continue participation. The United States is substantially under-represented in the United Nations, relative to its contributions. To develop a legitimate, sustainable, multi-party organization among unequal members, the smaller players must retain enough power to prevent being overwhelmed. The previous two sections have focused on how many people each local government is provided in the bylaws; the next section looks at who those people are and who is permitted to select them.

4.3 Constraints on Representation and Selection for Local Governments

As outlined in Chapter 2, who represents these local governments on RIGO boards is a second key question for understanding the governance structure. This representation is segregated into three questions: (1) Are local governments constrained in their selection of representatives? (2) When local governments are constrained in their selection process, which actors have named protected seats on the board? (3) When a local government representative is not named *ex officio* to the board, who has a say in the selection process? This section returns to evaluating the full 149 RIGOs with formalized governance documentation. Just as in the

previous sections, this research relies on cluster samples using the RIGO as the unit of analysis, and not the local government.

4.3.1 Are Local Governments Constrained in Their Selection of Representatives?

Representation of local government members is diverse within RIGO boards as well as across RIGO boards. As seen above in Figure 7 from the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission bylaws, populations determine the mix of citizens, elected officials and local planning commissioners named as representatives to the board. Thus, this mix will fluctuate within the region, but no locality has the decision to choose outside of these constraints. However, some RIGOs have no constraints at all on who can represent their constituent local governments. In the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (Greenfield, MA), the only requirement to be a representative of a local government is that “[representatives] shall be residents and registered voters of the towns from which they are appointed... [and] not be an employee of the Council.” (Franklin Regional Council of Governments Charter, 1997, pg. 4). The examples of the Richmond and Franklin regions represent two spectral opposite approaches to converting membership to representation, with a variety of regional board structures adopting strategies in between. However, there is no single, logically defensible ordinal ranking of these structures; a local government could be prescribed more or fewer elected officials, citizens, professional staff, or seats without constraint. As a result, I rely on a binary nominal operationalization to compare RIGOs that have board members with constraints to those that do not.

In all, 54 RIGOs have at least one member with at least one representative appointed without constraints. With a 95% Bernoulli Confidence Interval, this means that 28.3-43.7% of RIGOs overall will have at least one member with at least one representative appointed without constraints. To some extent, this appears to be a function of the structure of membership. Table 6 disaggregates these frequencies by membership type:

Table 6 RIGOs with at Least One Representative Appointed without Constraint by Membership Type

	# of RIGOs with 1+ Rep. Appointed w/o Constraint	RIGOs of This Type in the Sample	%
Type I (Counties Only)	6	19	31.6%
Type II (Counties and Some Munis)	7	29	24.1%
Type III (Counties and All Munis)	25	89	28.1%
Type IV (Munis Only)	6	11	54.5%

Most noticeable from the above table is how commonly appointments without constraints occur in Type IV RIGOs. These RIGOs are found exclusively in the New England states and Alaska where counties are weak or non-existent. Type IV RIGOs also frequently have the smallest populations with single jurisdiction membership. All other things being equal, constraints on who can serve impact smaller jurisdictions more severely. Giving these localities the flexibility to send the most qualified or capable person regardless of their role may be an important condition to consenting to collective choice arrangements. The small sample size of the overall total (n=11) makes it difficult to infer too much, but it is reasonable that this trend would be more common throughout Type IV RIGOs. This gives an indication of the flexibility local government members have across RIGOs, but tells us little about the variation within RIGOs.

RIGOs can constrain the selection of representatives for all, some, or no members within their bylaws. In almost 63% of RIGOs in the random sample, the bylaws strictly prescribe who is permitted to represent every local government member. They may have some latitude in which council member or which citizen is selected, but the role itself is firmly constrained. In almost 17% of the RIGOs in the random sample, no local government is constrained in any way regarding who may represent it on the board of the RIGO. There may be agreements internal to the local government on these matters (e.g. a formal or informal agreement between council and the mayor), but they are not prescribed within the RIGO's governance documents. In slightly more than 20% of the random sample of RIGOs, some local governments have constraints while others do not. No readily interpreted pattern occurs among those within the same RIGO that are under constraints from those that are not, but it represents an opportunity for future research.

4.3.2 Which Actors Have Protected Seats on RIGO Boards?

As stated earlier, it is difficult to create a logically defensible ordinal ranking of constraints on representation. This section aggregates the nominal categories of constraints across RIGOs to identify a composite picture of which actors have protected seats on RIGO boards. This section again uses a cluster analysis, averaging percentages of constraints from each RIGO so that a board size of 10 is treated equally to a board size of 30. Table 7 provides the results of this analysis across the ten categories coded for RIGOs in the random sample:

Table 7 Average Composite RIGO Board by Form of Representation (n=150)

Representative	% of Representatives
-----------------------	-----------------------------

County Ex Officio	7.70	
Municipal Ex Officio	11.36	
County Elected Representative	12.53	
Municipal Elected Representative	21.64	
County or Municipal Elected Representative	1.86	
TOTAL SEATS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS³⁸	55.09	
Local Government Employee		1.12
Any Local Government Official (Elected or Employee)		6.32
Citizens		5.83
Other Representation		5.17
No Constraints		26.47
TOTAL		100%

The two most noteworthy findings from these results are the strong presence of elected officials as RIGO board members and the relatively weak presence of local government professional staff. This puts RIGOs in a different place on the spectrum from a pure interpretation of Deil Wright's Intergovernmental Relations (1990). It also runs counter to Frederickson's (1999) conceptualization of administrative conjunction where elected officials rarely play a part. In part due to these frameworks, the overwhelming body of research on how local governments work across boundaries focuses on the role of professional staff like city managers. These findings indicate that some important facets of regional governance occur by the decisions of elected officials. As identified in Chapter 2, very little research has been done on how elected officials receive input and prioritize outcomes in the decisions they make on a RIGO board. Because the board represents collective principals that drive the agenda of their agents (RIGO professional staff), how these decisions come to be made is a crucial component of a better understanding of RIGOs (and cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations writ large). This is one highly promising avenue for future research.

³⁸ Bernoulli 95% confidence interval for all elected officials: 47.1 - 63.1%

4.3.3 When a Local Government has Flexibility in its Representative, Who has Rights to Engage in that Selection?

In the overwhelming majority of cases throughout the United States, local governments independently decide who will represent them within the constraints of the RIGO bylaws. In a few rare circumstances, actors external to that local government have a say, in part or wholly, as to who is selected as a representative. This section again uses cluster analysis but bifurcates county representatives from municipal representatives. Within the 137 RIGOs with county representatives, more than 90% of the time counties select independently. Twelve RIGOs have at least one county representative selected by the municipalities within that county and six RIGOs have at least one county representative selected jointly by the county and municipalities (including through IGOs or similar county-wide bodies). In eleven RIGOs, county representatives were selected some other way; this usually involved participation by the state's governor or state legislators. Among the 111 RIGOs with municipal representatives, no more than two RIGOs had external selection mechanisms. These findings conform to theoretical expectations, but as the first such research using bylaws and governance documents still represent an important empirical contribution.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the structure of RIGO boards is substantially more complex than the literature to this point has concluded. By directly coding local government

members under the terms of the actual bylaws and governance documents, I show that the “one-member, one-vote” structure the literature upheld as dominant for the last forty years is insufficient to describe this complexity. Furthermore, my research generates meaningful evidence that collective choice arrangements overwhelmingly honor population proportionality more than scholarship has previously acknowledged.

This new approach counters the prior thread of research into regional governance that bemoaned a perceived imbalance in representation for urban governments. These findings show that the board structures of RIGOs with large urban cities look similar to those without. Using the Institutional Membership Score and Population Proportionality Scores in tandem shows there are relatively few RIGOs where large cities are overwhelmed on the board by a one-member, one-vote structure. However, a one-person, one-vote structure is similarly rare. Most boards balance these two factors to ensure that the city has a substantial enough presence to reflect its importance, but smaller players can retain some amount of collective veto power. This is an approach similar to how international organizations like the European Union or UN Security Council operate.

Constraints on who can represent local governments on RIGO boards identifies a new gap in the literature on the mechanisms of regional governance. While the bulk of scholarship has looked at the roles professional staff such as city managers play in processes like interlocal agreements, my research shows that elected officials have a much more key role within RIGO boards. We currently know very little about what drives the decision-making processes of elected officials in a regional governance context, so this represents a fruitful path for future research.

5.0 Chapter 5: Alternate Uses of IMS & PPS

Histories abound on the formation of international organizations like the European Union, United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (Dinan, 2004; El-Agraa, 1998; Schild, 1995) and the ways in which they have evolved over time. Archivists have protected the documents that reflect the various points of negotiation and proposals for compromise; these are publicly accessible for future historians. Rich explorations of the details of these organizations' geneses continue to generate new insights into how supranational institutions developed their governance and, in particular, the collective choice arrangements.

Furthermore, the international organizations literature regularly recognizes that collective choice arrangements evolve to meet members' needs and reflect policy agendas that expand and contract (Posner & Sykes, 2014; Vestergaard & Wade, 2013; Woodward, 2007). The expansion of the European Coal and Steel Community from six countries at its founding, grew to become the European Economic Community, and eventually becoming the European Union. This expanded membership, policy agenda, and collective choice arrangements through the Treaty of Rome (1957), the Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht Treaty (1993), the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), the Treaty of Nice (2003), and the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). These are documents that codify the negotiations and assent of these nation's leaders. Koremenos, Lipson, & Snidal (2001) argue: "Although we do not argue that all institutional change is the product of conscious design, we do consider it the overriding mechanism guiding the development of international institutions" (pg. 766-767). The genesis stories of RIGOs, particularly those from the 1960s and 1970s, and their evolutions since then, have not been systematically documented in any similar way.

A substantial consequence of the “one-member, one-vote” refrain that dominates the scholarship evaluating cross-boundary intergovernmental organization is that a local government’s representational rights are viewed as static, regardless of how the organization may change, how state legislation affecting these bodies may be altered, how membership changes, and how the municipalities and counties within the region may change over time. Given all of these possibilities for how governance needs may shift, it seems highly implausible that these governance documents are cast in stone. Of the 142 RIGOs with dated governance documents in the sample, more than eighty have made revisions or amendments to these documents in the past ten years; many of these documents list the many multiple dates on which amendments were adopted. These changes may not have directly affected local governments’ representational rights, but it is a solid indicator that the governance of RIGOs is far from static. Evaluation is scarce as to how collective choice arrangements evolve within American cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations to meet members’ needs and reflect changing policy agendas³⁹.

This chapter demonstrates that the method developed to calculate IMS and PPS values outlined in Chapter 4 further can be used within a single organization both to evaluate proposals and trace the evolution of collective choice arrangements over an organization’s history. This chapter profiles two RIGOs: the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, MI) and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (CA). The Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC) re-launched itself in 2012 from scratch and retained the proposals it considered for its initial collective choice arrangements. In this chapter, I present how the IMS

³⁹ The closest examination of these issues is the ACIR (1973) discussion of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (Cleveland, OH).

and PPS can be used to evaluate these proposals. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) saw rapid and uneven population growth and shifts in which local government membership since its formation in the 1960s. The evolution of SACOG's collective choice arrangements reflects these changes in their IMS and PPS values over time.

I supplement both of these profiles with background information on the regions and the organizations using meeting minutes and documentation, interviews with elected and appointed officials from the region, and other publicly available documentation. This chapter focuses on alternative applications of the IMS and PPS; these chapters are not intended to be a history of how the RIGOs decided upon collective choice arrangements. In each section, I begin by providing some background information on the region in which each RIGO operates. Then, I use original documentation to demonstrate the applicability of the IMS and PPS.

5.1 Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

The State of Michigan groups together Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties as the State Planning and Development Region 3 (SPDR). Governor George Romney issued Executive Directive 1968-1 that organized the state into (after amendments) 14 state-designated planning and development regions (SPDRs). The 1968 Executive Directive did not put in place provisions for governance of the region by local governments; these were boundaries identified by the state for the implementation of state functions. However, SPDRs have often, but not always, coincided with regional collaboration efforts over time. I use this particular regional definition because it reflects one of the key ways the state allocates resources to Michigan regions; these original five counties formed the original SMPC.

The two major cities of SMPC are Kalamazoo and Battle Creek. Kalamazoo is the primary city of a two-county MSA with its contiguous western county, Van Buren⁴⁰. Battle Creek is the primary city of a single county (Calhoun) MSA. As of 2010, the five-county region had a population of around 550,000. This population puts it in the top third of RIGOs nationwide. Kalamazoo County is roughly twice the population of Calhoun County; however, Calhoun County is at least twice as populous as the remaining three counties individually. As a result, the region is not entirely built around one major city (Process A region) nor is it built on multiple relatively equal powers (Process B region⁴¹).

Like several other Midwestern states, Michigan divides local government into counties, municipalities, and townships. There are five counties, forty municipalities, and eighty-five townships throughout the original five counties of SMPC. These local governments are quite evenly balanced across the five counties, even though populations are not (see Table 8). Michigan is a strong home-rule state, so municipalities and townships have substantial authority within their jurisdiction.

Table 8 Municipalities and Townships by County within Original SMPC Members

County	Cities	Villages	Townships	2010 Population
Barry	5	4	19	59,173
Branch	2	3	16	45,248
Calhoun ⁴²	4	5	19	136,146

⁴⁰ Van Buren County is a member of the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (Niles/Benton Harbor).

⁴¹ Defined in Chapter 2, see pages 41-43.

⁴² Does not include Huron Potawatomi native government.

Kalamazoo	4	5	15	250,331
St. Joseph	2	6	16	61,295

5.1.1 The Struggling Regional Initiatives of Southcentral Michigan

The five-county region of Southcentral Michigan has struggled to build and sustain regional organizations. Visser's (2004) comparative case study article compared the faltering Kalamazoo County Council of Governments (KCCOG) to the thriving Grand Valley Metropolitan Council. Most notably to this research, Visser identifies that a proposed proportional voting structure of KCCOG exacerbated divisions between the city and smaller municipalities and townships. This conflict was resolved eventually, but mistrust persisted (Visser, 2004). By the early 2000s, KCCOG was dormant; the organization revived itself and focuses on sharing best practices (Klug, 2012).

In 2014, four local governments and Western Michigan University formed the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority (KCCDA). This interlocal agreement was designed to eventually create a single 911 call center for the county. In 2017, a referendum to increase surcharges on phone lines by \$2.30 per month to pay for this consolidation was defeated (Barrett, 2017a). The county's union of police officers, the Kalamazoo Fraternal Order of Police, publicly opposed both the consolidation and the referendum (Barrett, 2017b). In May 2018, KCCDA received a state grant of almost \$2 million to assist in the capital costs of consolidation (Devereaux, 2018).

The five original counties were the members of the prior incarnation of SMPC. The original version of SMPC was formed in 1973 and served as a federal Economic Development District (EDD) and a state-designated Regional Planning Commission that oversaw rural

transportation planning⁴³ with the state's Department of Transportation. By the early 2000s, the prior SMPC stopped servicing the member counties. Eventually, its federal certification as an EDD lapsed and member local governments no longer acknowledged the prior incarnation of SMPC. The current incarnation of SMPC has no records or information related to the prior SMPC. Legal constraints limit the amount of information that can be shared about its dissolution.

5.1.2 The Curious Case of Barry County

After the 2010 Census, Barry County was classified with the Grand Rapids MSA (north and west of Barry County). At that time, there was no viable Regional Planning Commission in place in SPDR 3 and Barry County began to see itself as more aligned with the Grand Rapids region. Because the State of Michigan still classified it with SPDR 3, Barry County joined SMPC at its formation in 2012. By late 2013, Barry County had arranged to leave SMPC and join the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (not a RIGO) that includes Grand Rapids. To date, the state has not updated its SPDR boundaries. As a result Barry County still receives transportation planning through SPDR 3 and the new SMPC, but holds no seats on the board. Municipalities in Barry County (but not the county government) have also joined the Grand Valley Metro Council, a separate RIGO that serves different functions for the Grand Rapids area. As a result, the profile of the region refers to five counties at the inception of SMPC, but contains only four counties currently.

⁴³ Both the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek urbanized areas have MPOs that function independently of the SMPC.

5.1.3 The Re-Formation of SMPC and the Proposals for Collective Choice Arrangements

The State of Michigan developed several pieces of enabling legislation to facilitate regional governance that minimally constrain the collective choice arrangements. When taken together, the legislation creates a complicated landscape of possibilities for cooperating local governments to navigate (Michigan Association of Planning Law Committee, 2011)⁴⁴. SMPC was reformed in 2012 under Public Act 281 of 1945 that allows any local government units (including counties, municipalities, and townships) to form regional planning commissions. This legislation did not prescribe a governance structure but prohibited these commissions from excluding county board supervisor involvement on the board (MI Comp L § 125.12 [2017]).

Lee Adams, the current Executive Director of SMPC, was tasked with trying to re-build SMPC. Mr. Adams started his career working for Kalamazoo County with the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. However, as the county saw the importance of revitalizing SMPC, they tasked Mr. Adams with restarting the organization. Mr. Adams was able to provide me the original documentation he used to compare the initial collective choice arrangement proposals. This was sent to me in an Excel document with six worksheets that evaluated a variety of demographic and political structure issues. Mr. Adams invented these options himself, having done prior research as an undergraduate in collective choice arrangements. He also relied on nearby Regional Planning Commissions as models, representing potential policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008). These options are reprinted from Mr. Adams's initial Excel document in Figure 8. Mr. Adams presents in the lower-right corner of the figure what proportions of civic

⁴⁴ This 2011 report developed model legislation that would simplify the structures of regional cooperation. As of this writing, the legislation has not been enacted.

and private sector representation would be needed to comply with EDA regulations so that SMPC can regain its certification as an Economic Development District.

The re-formation of SMPC follows Keohane's pre-conditions of a limited number of players, existing patterns that build confidence, and shared interests (Keohane, 1984). Municipalities and townships were not considered to be initial members of SMPC, making the organization a Type I RIGO. Mr. Adams said that keeping the number of initial players small made the re-organization more manageable. He also acknowledged a lack of trust among some municipalities and townships towards collaboration. There is currently discussion about opening up membership or representation to municipalities and townships. As SMPC has demonstrated successes, there is more interest in municipal and township participation (Lee Adams, Personal Communication; May 1, 2018).

Number of total votes and percent of board														
	A		B		C		D		E		F		G	
Barry	3	20.0%	2	15.4%	3	16.7%	2	10.5%	2	12.50%	5	13.51%	4	19.05%
Branch	3	20.0%	2	15.4%	3	16.7%	2	10.5%	2	12.50%	5	13.51%	3	14.29%
Calhoun	3	20.0%	3	23.1%	4	22.2%	5	26.3%	4	25.00%	9	24.32%	5	23.81%
Kalamazoo	3	20.0%	4	30.8%	5	27.8%	8	42.1%	6	37.50%	13	35.14%	5	23.81%
St Joseph	3	20.0%	2	15.4%	3	16.7%	2	10.5%	2	12.50%	5	13.51%	4	19.05%
	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	18	100.0%	19	100.0%	16	100.00%	37	100.0%	21	100.0%

Percent distortion from county share of regional population													
Barry	9.28%		4.67%		6.0%		-0.2%		1.78%		2.80%		8.33%
Branch	11.81%		7.19%		8.5%		2.3%		4.31%		5.32%		6.09%
Calhoun	-4.66%		-1.58%		-2.4%		1.7%		0.34%		-0.33%		-0.85%
Kalamazoo	-25.33%		-14.56%		-17.6%		-3.2%		-7.83%		-10.20%		-21.52%
St Joseph	8.90%		4.28%		5.6%		-0.6%		1.40%		2.41%		7.95%
	59.98%		32.29%		39.98%		7.98%		15.67%		21.06%		44.74%

		Residents per representative						
County Population	%	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Barry	59,173	10.7%	19,724	29,587	19,724	29,587	11,835	14,793
Branch	45,248	8.2%	15,083	22,624	15,083	22,624	9,050	15,083
Calhoun	136,146	24.7%	45,382	45,382	34,037	27,229	34,037	27,229
Kalamazoo	250,331	45.3%	83,444	62,583	50,066	31,291	41,722	50,066
St Joseph	61,295	11.1%	20,431	30,648	20,432	30,648	12,259	15,324
Total	552,193							

EDA Board Requirements		
Sector	1	Private Sector Rep
	1	Chamber Ex Director Post Secondary ed Workforce Dev rep
	51%	Municipal Reps

Plan	Rational Basis
A	Each county receives the same number of representatives
B	Base of two reps, one additional rep for each 100k residents
C	Base of three reps, one rep for each 100k residents
D	One rep per 30,000 residents
E	Two votes per 75,000 residents
F	Southwest Michigan Plan
G	West Michigan Plan - <10,000 - 1 vote, 10k<X<25k - 2, 25k<X<50k - 3, 50k<X<100,000 - 4, >100k - 5

Reps needed from each sector		
	Private & Econ Dev	Muni
A	6	8
B	5	7
C	7	10
D	7	10
E	6	9
F	13	19
G	8	11

Figure 8 Original County Representation Excel Worksheet Designed by Lee Adams⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Provided by personal correspondence; June 8, 2017.

In the original documentation, the SMPC alternatives built a similar measure of population proportionality to the PPS. Mr. Adams was entirely unaware of the Taagepera & Shugart (1989) Deviation Index (D) that is the basis of the PPS (Lee Adams, Personal Communication; May 1, 2018). Despite that, Mr. Adams calculated the absolute differences between each county's percentage of seats on the board and the county's percentage of population within SMPC. More remarkably, he aggregated those absolute differences to give a blunt, but still highly meaningful, value akin to the PPS⁴⁶. Mr. Adams also calculated each option's number of residents per representative. While Option A is the "one-member, one-vote" alternative, no similar calculation is done for IMS.

In Table 9, I have calculated both the IMS and PPS values for the seven alternatives. The table provides the same descriptions as Figure 8 and includes the percentage of votes provided to the "great power" of the region, Kalamazoo County. Mr. Adams recommended, and the SMPC interim board adopted, Option B. Under that proposal, the smaller counties are over-represented relative to their population to ensure SMPC more truly reflects the voice of the region. During our conversation, Mr. Adams acknowledged it was not the most representative by population, but he said it was politically feasible. He said he thought that was the best option because it "ensured the smaller counties had a strong enough voice and prevented Kalamazoo County from dominating the board." (Lee Adams, Interview, May 1, 2018).

⁴⁶ Mr. Adams's method is blunt in that it works well for comparing collective choice arrangements for a RIGO with a consistent set of members (his intended purpose), but would lose validity comparing across multiple RIGOs with different numbers of members.

Table 9 Alternative Board Structures Initially Considered by SMPC

Option	Description (from Excel)	IMS	PPS	% of Votes for Kalamazoo County
A	Each county receives the same number of representatives	1.000	0.700	20.00
B (Recommended and Adopted)	Base of two [representatives], one additional [representative] for each 100k residents	0.769	0.839	30.80
C	Base of three [representatives], one [representative] for each 100k residents	0.833	0.800	27.80
D	One [representative] per 30,000 residents	0.526	0.960	42.10
E	Two votes per 75,000 residents	0.625	0.922	37.50
F	Southwest Michigan RPC (Niles/Benton Harbor)	0.676	0.895	35.14
G	West Michigan RPC (Grand Rapids)	0.714	0.776	23.81

Figure 9 shows how the seven proposed collective choice arrangements are plotted based on IMS and PPS. Each of these options is consistent with the large-n sample results identified in Chapter 4. In fact, all seven options are strongly in the upper-right quadrant where both IMS and PPS are maximized. Among the seven alternatives, Option B (the adopted alternative) splits the difference between proposal that trend more towards “one-person, one-vote” (Options D-F) or more towards “one-member, one-vote” (Options A & C), but maximizes both values more than Option G.

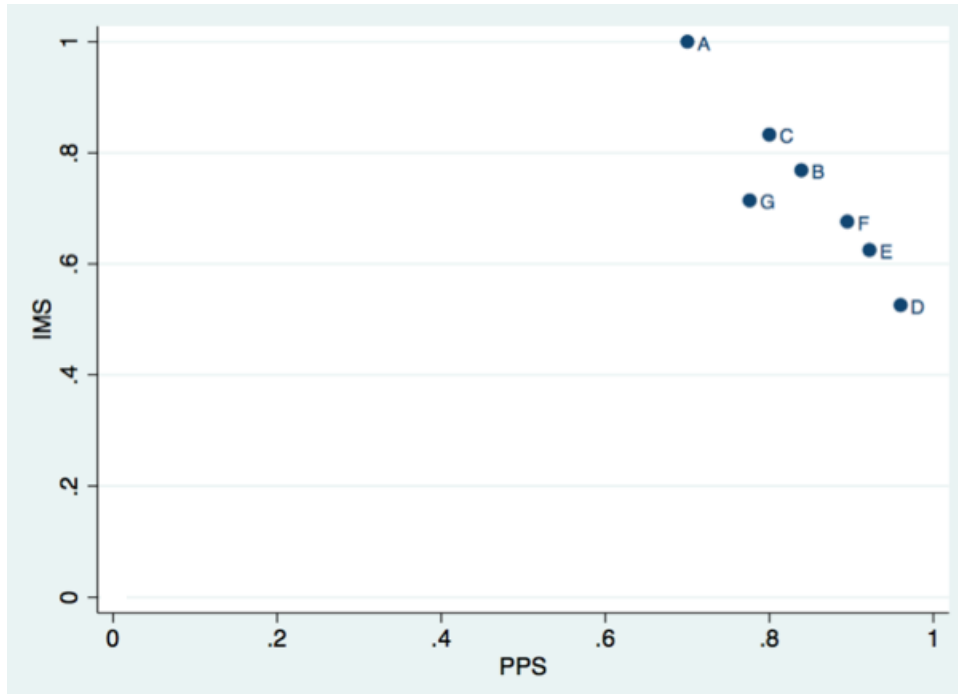


Figure 9 Board Structure Alternatives for SMPC Plotted by IMS and PPS

Local governments undertaking collaborative activities delegated to institutions like RIGOs have a responsibility to their citizens to evaluate and negotiate their specific representational rights within that organization. However, the role of RIGO professional staff like Lee Adams is to think of what is good for the whole organization. Because of his prior experience, he generated a statistic similar to the PPS to measure the population proportionality of each proposed collective choice arrangement. Informed by those calculations, he was able to provide context to his recommendation that struck an appropriate balance between institutional membership and population proportionality. IMS and PPS can help designers of collective choice arrangement proposals see the impact of aggregated representational rights to ensure a variety of options. These variables scatter-plotted together can also readily demonstrate to local

government members that one need not sacrifice population proportionality for institutional membership or vice versa.

5.2 Sacramento Area Council of Governments

The history of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and its predecessor, the Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission (SRAPC), demonstrate that collective choice arrangements evolve and innovate to meet members' needs in a changing environment. Sacramento County has remained the "great power" since SACOG's founding; it has always constituted at least 60% of SACOG's population. Sacramento County (including the City of Sacramento and its incorporated suburbs) has agreed to a variety of collective choice arrangements with its neighbors and its municipalities over this time, shedding light on the complexities of these relationships, beyond "one-member, one-vote." The region tripled in population between 1960 and 2010. Municipalities were incorporated, adjacent territory was annexed, and consolidations were considered. As a result, changes in both demographic and political structures put pressure on SACOG's collective choice arrangements. Members withdrew from SACOG over these issues, and they returned under different agreements.

I begin this section by providing some brief context of the six-county region in which SACOG currently operates. Then, I outline the history of the changes to SACOG's membership and collective choice arrangements over time from SRAPC's founding in 1965 to the 2003 JPA that is still in place today. I use the IMS and PPS methods presented in Chapter 4 to quantitatively demonstrate these changes. These values are products of the negotiation process and changes in political structure and population, they do not explain why or how these changes

were enacted. Finally, I discuss the current triple-threshold model SACOG currently uses adopted in the 2003 JPA.

5.2.1 Background on the Sacramento Region

The current footprint of SACOG covers six California counties (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba). This region is home to more than 2.3 million people; it is the twenty-first largest RIGO in the United States. These six counties collectively have twenty-two municipalities with a substantial portion of the region also living in unincorporated areas. The largest of these municipalities is the City of Sacramento (2010 Census Population: 466,488, 20.14% of RIGO population). Two Sacramento suburbs have more than 100,000 people: Elk Grove (Sacramento County) and Roseville (Placer County).

The six-county region experienced tremendous and uneven growth between the founding of SRAPC in 1963 and the 2003 Joint Powers Agreement. Unlike many of the rust belt and northeastern cities where center cities or urban counties lost population due to suburbanization during these years (Teaford, 1990), the Sacramento region saw growth throughout, but in uneven amounts. El Dorado County was 432% more populous in 2000 than it was in 1960; Placer County grew at a 336% rate in the same time frame. Meanwhile, Yuba County grew, but only at a 78% rate⁴⁷. Municipalities incorporated as suburbanization continued and the City of

⁴⁷ Values generated from “1850-2010 Historical US Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities/Towns in California” http://www.dof.ca.gov/Reports/Demographic_Reports/documents/2010-1850_STCO_IncCities-FINAL.xls

Sacramento struggled to keep pace. Since the 1960 Census, six municipalities have incorporated in the region and the City of North Sacramento consolidated with the City of Sacramento. Between 1960 and 2000, the City of Sacramento population more than doubled, but shrank as a proportion of the six-county region's population from 26.5% to 21%.

Sacramento County has always held the majority of population in the region, and remains so today. The county grew 143% between 1960-2010, but declined as a percent the six-county region's population from 70% to 61%. However much like their Northeast and Rust Belt counterparts (Glass, 2011; Teafor, 1990), civic and business interests rallied for a more logical organization for local governments putting forward two separate city-county consolidation referenda (1974 and 1990) for Sacramento; both failed (Sparrow, 2004).

The six-county region includes the bulk of the Sacramento Valley, but extends far enough eastward to include California communities in the Sierra Nevada mountains abutting Lake Tahoe. These communities (both incorporated and unincorporated) are closer to Reno and Carson City, Nevada than they are to Sacramento. A bi-state compact formed the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) that includes representation from Placer and El Dorado county governments and the City of South Lake Tahoe (CA). The City of South Lake Tahoe is a member of TRPA. TRPA is an important actor that ties regional governance on environmental

conservation and economic development across state lines for the Lake Tahoe region, but is not, strictly speaking, a RIGO⁴⁸.

5.2.2 Utilizing IMS and PPS to Trace a RIGO's Collective Choice Arrangements Over Time

This section demonstrates how the Institutional Membership Scores and Population Proportionality Scores can change over time within the same organization. Together, the IMS and PPS values over time provide a more comprehensive view of how amendments and revisions affect a RIGO's (or other similar body's) collective choice arrangements than has been provided in the literature to date. The six-county region surrounding Sacramento, California served by the Sacramento Area Regional Planning Commission (1965-1980), and its successor, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (1980-present), provides an excellent example of how these measures of collective choice arrangements can change over time. The region's economic and migration boom created constantly shifting population disparities among local governments and the incorporation of new municipalities.

I use the same methods presented in Chapter 3 and the same formulas as in Chapter 4 to show this change over time. The timeline of SACOG and SRAPC history is provided in the 2016

⁴⁸ TRPA meets many of the criteria of a RIGO in its ambition, legitimacy, agenda, but does not meet the membership criteria. As of 2018, only six of the fifteen members represented local governments. Eight of the members were state officials or appointees from either California or Nevada and one is a presidential appointee.

SACOG handbook (pg. 22). For population information, I use a table of Census data⁴⁹ provided by the State of California. Joint Powers Agreements (JPA) were provided by SACOG and online searches. In some cases, only draft versions of JPAs were recovered. These were used to code the prior collective choice agreements only when modifications were clearly marked (e.g. strikethroughs and underlines). In some cases to better reflect the regional growth of the time, I evaluate the collective choice arrangements a year after they were initiated to use the more accurate Census data. Within SRAPC and SACOG, all selection is internal to the local government members and I do not evaluate who may sit as a representative for the local governments. Exceptions to these methods are noted, as applicable.

The information provided here is presented more as proof of concept than history. I have reasonable confidence that what is provided here sufficiently represents the path SRAPC and SACOG have gone through in their collective choice arrangements. Where I am unclear on what a document may have said, I note the limitations as appropriate. More importantly for clarity's sake, I am not trying to explain *why* shifts in collective choice arrangements occurred. These decisions involve many other factors that are not directly reflected by the IMS and PPS, for example, changes to the policy portfolio or the negotiating skills of those representing local governments. IMS and PPS represent the magnitude of the changes that happened over time that can then be pursued for in-depth analysis to better understand the mechanisms that caused changes to the JPA. Table 10 summarizes these collective choice arrangements.

⁴⁹ Values generated from "1850-2010 Historical US Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities/Towns in California" http://www.dof.ca.gov/Reports/Demographic_Reports/documents/2010-1850_STCO_IncCities-FINAL.xls

5.2.3 Timeline of Changes

The Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission (SRAPC) was formed in 1965 through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) among four counties (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo) and their thirteen cities. Despite extensive searches this document could not be recovered, however a variety of documents give clues as to how the organization was initially set up. Records show that the organization provided one seat per county and that the thirteen municipalities were provided multijurisdictional membership with representation rotated in some fashion (Sacramento Area Council of Governments, n.d.). All thirteen municipalities remain members regardless of the rotation method, but the details of how representation manifests could yield different results. However, reasonable assumptions can be imputed here. The 1980 records (which would reflect a 1974 JPA) show six municipal commissioners (Hatfield, 1980). In the absence of better information, I assume six municipal representatives at this point in the organization's history and collective multi-jurisdictional membership for all thirteen municipalities.

As “great powers” in the region, Sacramento County and the City of Sacramento both accepted a less population proportional collective choice arrangement in the 1965 JPA. Based on the 1960 Census data, Sacramento County had more than three quarters of the SRAPC population. Despite that, the county has one vote on the board for its more than 500,000 residents, with almost 300,000 of these residents living in unincorporated areas. The remaining nine members serve on average about 45,000 people. The City of Sacramento accepted some form of seat rotation with twelve other municipalities, even though it retained more than 70% of

the municipal population in SRAPC⁵⁰. Based on the assumptions above, SRAPC begins with an IMS of .500 and a PPS of .529⁵¹.

By 1970, Sutter and Yuba Counties and their four collective municipalities collectively joined SRAPC through amendments to the SRAPC JPA (signed in 1969⁵²). Sutter and Yuba counties were two of the three smallest in SRAPC at the time. Both counties had grown in population by more than 25% since the 1960 Census; they were booming like the rest of the region. This allowed SRAPC to expand its reach to the growing northern valleys. Again, this version of the JPA is pieced together based on assumptions from historical records. Under the same collective choice arrangements of one vote per county and six rotating seats for multi-jurisdictional municipal membership, the 1970 IMS increased to .583 and PPS increased to .592. In Figure 5, this shift would move the organization more towards the upper-right corner where both IMS and PPS are maximized.

In 1974, a new JPA reflected two major changes to SRAPC: a permanent seat for the City of Sacramento and the withdrawal of El Dorado and Placer counties “due to concerns of valley

⁵⁰ By 1965, the City of Sacramento had merged with North Sacramento. This percentage reflects the 1960 populations of both municipalities over the total population in incorporated areas of SRAPC.

⁵¹ It seems unlikely SRAPC would provide rotation to more than six municipalities. This hypothetical scenario would put these four counties (all with majority populations in unincorporated area in 1960) at an even greater disadvantage. In an alternate scenario where the 1965 JPA provided only four seats for municipalities to keep the number of votes equal to counties, the IMS increases to .625 and the PPS increases to .553 (moving more towards the upper-right corner in Figure 5). The remaining seven representatives (excluding Sacramento County) would represent about 58,500 citizens on average.

⁵² Measured in 1970 to reflect census changes and the merger of the cities of North Sacramento and Sacramento that happened after the 1960 Census.

dominance” (Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2016, pg. 22). Without accounting for growth between 1970 and 1974, these two changes simultaneously occurring dramatically decrease the PPS from .592 before the 1947 JPA to .299. Sacramento County is now a larger percentage of a smaller region without substantial changes in representational rights. The City of Sacramento now has a permanent representative ensuring a voice at the table for its more than 250,000 residents, but now the remaining municipalities in SRAPC have five representatives for just over 100,000 people.

In 1980, the local governments restructured and renamed the organization to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Three Placer County municipalities are now members (Loomis, Rocklin, and Roseville), but the county government has not rejoined. The new JPA implemented weighted voting that gave Sacramento County three votes and the City of Sacramento two votes⁵³; it also provided a single municipal representative for each of the five counties. This structure creates five multi-jurisdictional members for each county rather than one multi-jurisdictional member for all fourteen municipalities. This increase in the number of members is the primary cause for the IMS rising to .769; the weighted votes for Sacramento County and the City of Sacramento are the main driver in the PPS increasing to .520. Sacramento County has one vote per more than 250,000 people; two other counties (Sutter and Yuba) have one vote each for about 50,000 people. The City of Sacramento has two votes for over 275,000 people; no county’s municipal multi-jurisdictional member has more than 70,000 people. Even under this weighted formula, the largest local governments still agree to collective choice

⁵³ These votes can be held by a single representative or split by representatives at the local government’s discretion.

arrangements where smaller municipalities and counties have population disproportional representational rights.

Table 10 Timeline of Changes to SRAPC/SACOG Collective Choice Arrangements

Year	# of Counties	# of Municipalities	Sacramento County of RIGO Population	IMS	PPS	Notes
1965	4	13	77%	.500	.529	Initial Formation of SRAPC
1970	6	17	68%	.583	.592	Addition of Sutter and Yuba Counties (JPA signed 1969)
1974	4	12	76%	.600	.299	Withdrawal of El Dorado, Placer Counties ⁵⁴ ; Permanent Seat for Sacramento City
1980	4	14	76%	.769	.520	Weighted formula; changes name to SACOG
1990	4	15	76%	.769	.533	No major changes; census update to reflect growth
2000a	6	18	63%	.632	.536	(Reflects Unweighted Voting Rules) Major municipal incorporations; rejoining of El Dorado and Placer Counties
2000b	6	18	63%	.500	.697	(Reflects Weighted Voting Rules requiring 2/3rds majority)

⁵⁴ The City of Roseville in Placer County remained a member of SRAPC.

Between 1980 and 1990, collective choice arrangements remained relatively stable but the region continued growing. Every local government over 1,000 people that belongs to SACOG grows by at least ten percent in just the ten years between 1980 and 1990; cities like Rocklin and Folsom more than double in population in that time. The newly incorporated Yolo County municipality of West Sacramento (1990 population: 28,898) joins SACOG in 1988. Even though no relevant amendments or revisions occurred to these sections of the JPA, growth in the suburbs of Sacramento County and the municipalities in Placer County marginally increased the PPS to .533.

By 2000, SACOG had once again revised the collective choice arrangements in their JPA and added new members. El Dorado County and Placer County rejoined; two large, newly incorporated cities in Sacramento County joined as well (Citrus Heights and Elk Grove) as did the City of Auburn. The 1999 JPA (City of Sacramento, 1999) now provides for two-stage voting rules: unweighted and weighted. The unweighted voting rules mostly extends the previous collective choice arrangements, but now gives multijurisdictional municipal members an additional representative for each 100,000 in population or fraction thereof. The growth and incorporation of new suburban Sacramento County municipalities meant an increase in population from just under 40,000 to more than 225,000 between 1990 and 2000⁵⁵. This rule increased the number of votes for multijurisdictional municipal members of Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties; thus, this reduced the IMS to .632. The combination of new members,

⁵⁵ Elk Grove incorporated on July 1, 2000 and was not included in the 2000 Census. Population estimated from Elk Grove CDP provided by the City of Elk Grove: http://www.elkgrovecity.org/city_hall/departments_divisions/planning/additional_resources/census_2000_information. This likely underestimates the true population as of incorporation.

population change, and these rules allowed the PPS for the unweighted voting rules to remain relatively similar to where it was in 1990.

The weighted voting rules provide for an entirely different set of representational rights, when a motion and a second are recognized after an unweighted vote. The weighted vote requires a two-thirds majority for adoption. Table 11 shows how these representational rights were provided:

Table 11 Weighted Voting Values under SACOG 1999 JPA

Member	Base Value	1 Vote Added for each 100,000 People Above ⁵⁶ :
Sacramento County ⁵⁷	6	700,000 (Unincorporated Area)
City of Sacramento ⁸	4	500,000
Other Counties	0	100,000
All Other Representatives	1	N/A

Using 2000 Census populations, these weighted voting rules have the highest PPS values of any set of collective choice arrangements in SACOG/SRAPC to this point. Sacramento County, the City of Sacramento, and its suburbs hold eleven weighted votes of the total twenty four; this would require only a small handful of other representatives to overturn an unweighted vote. As a result, the “great powers” do not have collective veto power, but they do retain substantial leverage. However, this two-stage voting structure did not last for very long.

⁵⁶ Or fraction thereof.

⁵⁷ Votes for the City and County of Sacramento are split when multiple representatives are present.

5.2.4 The 2003 Joint Powers Agreement

The 2003 Joint Powers Agreement requires a triple-majority to adopt policy: a majority of the twenty-two member municipalities, a majority of the six counties, and a majority of the population represented by those member governments⁵⁸. Under a single voting rule, SACOG now has collective choice arrangements that maximize institutional membership *and* population proportionality. This system does not give the largest local governments or the collective smaller local governments dominance over the agenda, and distributes veto power similarly. The system is adaptable for new municipal incorporations and responds to population growth and decline. Since it was adopted in 2003, no amendments to the collective choice arrangements section of the Joint Powers Arrangements have been ratified and no members have withdrawn.

So far as research has indicated, this triple-threshold testing innovation is unique to SACOG. Other multiple-testing RIGOs found within the random sample are either single county (San Diego), or do not distinguish between municipalities and counties in their institutional membership vote (Phoenix and Detroit). SACOG has clearly made several revisions to their collective choice arrangements over time before the 2003 JPA was implemented. It would seem that SACOG has found a path towards consensus for its members. One SACOG representative described the current system this way:

To keep all jurisdictions participating, we have to ensure that all jurisdictions are treated both fairly and equitably—and there is a difference. Our votes must have a majority of both cities and counties or they fail. So everyone knows that we need to find broadly applicable solutions, not just ones that benefit just the cities or just the counties. (Tom Stallard, personal correspondence)

⁵⁸ County populations are limited to unincorporated areas.

In demonstrating how changes in collective choice arrangements affect the IMS and PPS values, it is clear there is a much larger story here. The timeline shows how substantial the 1974 withdrawal of El Dorado and Placer Counties was on the population proportionality of SRAPC's collective choice arrangements, but does not give reasoning why beyond "valley dominance" (Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2016, pg. 22). The timeline begs similar questions as to the causes of the adoption of a weighted formula or the adoption of the two-stage rule. The causal pathways that describe why these changes occur are likely larger and more complex than just population change and changes to the landscape of local governments in the region. The political history and culture of a region, changes to state legislation, and the personalities of the people involved all likely contribute to governing documents' amendments and revisions individually and synergistically.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how IMS and PPS can be used to quantify inflection points in a RIGO's (or other similar organizational) history of collective choice arrangements. While scholarly literature currently lacks a systematic review of these organizations' histories and has collected limited data, these methods can be a valuable tool to shed light on the decisions boards make among proposals for collective choice arrangements and how they adjust them to respond to changes in their environments. Information is scarce about how these decisions are made both

at the organizational genesis and in evolution over time. However, I present here two considerations that seem worthy of further exploration.

In some cases, decisions about how local government representational rights are apportioned may be influenced by the options presented and recommendations of professional staff. At the inception of a new organization, representatives will have a variety of competing priorities. As a result, professional staff may take on a larger role in the design of collective choice arrangement proposals like Mr. Adams did in SMPC. Thoughtful, comprehensive proposals can build trust between members and professional staff by demonstrating they have an interest in fair treatment. Agreeing to these initial governing documents could be seen as temporary to keep members together and get the organization off the ground; it is unclear how important these initial documents are in constraining future revisions as a result of path dependence.

Informal factors may also influence the decisions to alter collective choice arrangements. The reputation of the local governments and its representatives could potentially play a role in negotiations. A long-tenured elected official with a strong network in the region could sway the process, meanwhile a newly-elected official without substantial experience (or worse, one with diminished reputation due to untrustworthiness or scandal) may have their opinions more readily dismissed. Similarly, the local governments themselves may have leverage or limited influence depending on how they maintain relationships. Bargaining and negotiating skill will likely not be uniform across all representatives, nor will access to outside forms of pressure through the media or interest groups (e.g. chambers of commerce or regional civic institutions).

With such limited information about how these decision-making processes occur, it is tough to trace through all the potential influences. The methods underlying IMS and PPS values

applied to a RIGO's negotiations and evolving governing documents can identify the most substantial moments where the RIGO identified a need to shift its collective choice arrangements for further investigation. Understanding why will require more records, a deeper understanding of the region and its local governments, and more detailed analysis.

6.0 Conclusion

The challenge of scholarship, particularly in professional schools, is to bridge the gap between theory and practice and “design research that produces actionable knowledge for practical problems” (Van de Ven, 2007). Actionable knowledge can provide applications of theory as well as larger frames around which inductive knowledge can be better understood. In this vein, I conclude the dissertation with a summary of findings that demonstrates some of the key findings from the prior five chapters and their application for practitioners like RIGO executive directors and key stakeholders like local government members and state policymakers. Finally, I present a potential future research agenda resulting from the findings in this dissertation.

6.1 Summary of Findings

Table 12 provides a brief summary of the most significant findings of the dissertation. However, in this section, I reframe these contributions away from the academic literature. Instead, I present practical applications of these findings for the benefit of RIGO practitioners and stakeholders.

Table 12 Summary of Findings

Prior Conventional Wisdom	Contribution of Dissertation
<p>1) One-member, one-vote collective choice arrangements are the dominant form in regional councils.</p> <p>(Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1973; Wyman, 1994)</p>	<p>1) RIGOs operate under a variety of complex collective choice arrangements that balance institutional membership and population proportionality, among other factors. These balances can be evaluated amongst proposed alternatives and evaluated as the organization evolves.</p>
<p>2) Large cities are under-represented in their representational rights relative to their population; this limits organizations like RIGOs to the lowest common denominator problems.</p> <p>(Hall, 2009; Orfield & Dawes, 2016; Sanchez, 2006)</p>	<p>2a) With limited exceptions, RIGOs with large cities demonstrate they account for population proportionality, but still retain a collective veto for smaller members.</p> <p>2b) The statutory authority of a RIGO and the policy areas a RIGO undertakes can be parsed from its collective choice arrangements, though they may relate to one another.</p>
<p>3) To date, cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations largely have been understood as a specific type of interlocal activity to be compared with other types of interlocal activity.</p> <p>(Barnes & Foster, 2012; Feiock, 2009; Tavares & Feiock, 2017)</p>	<p>3) Importing selected elements of the international organizations literature can enrich our understanding of RIGOs. We can use this scholarship to more rigorously model some elements of RIGO governance and develop research questions to understand the informal governance of these bodies and the role of large cities.</p>
<p>4) Elected officials are largely absent from interjurisdictional activity; the networks and ethos of professional staff are the main drivers for collaborative interlocal activity.</p> <p>(Frederickson, 1999)</p>	<p>4) Elected officials comprise the majority of representatives to an average RIGO board, and citizens appointed on behalf of the local government comprise a substantial minority. Professional staff rarely acts as a representative on behalf of their local government. The implications and details of this are not yet understood.</p>
<p>5) There is currently no national registry of governing documents for cross-boundary intergovernmental organizations.</p> <p>(Gerber & Gibson, 2009; Nelson, Sanchez, Wolf, & Farquhar, 2003)</p>	<p>5) From this project, there is now a library of hundreds of documents from more than 250 RIGOs so far. I am not permitted to publish these documents by some RIGOs, but interested scholars can contact me for more information.</p>

Most importantly for practitioners, this research is a key step in building a toolbox of resources to help RIGOs modify their collective choice arrangements as the needs of the organization and the region evolve. I have rejected consistently throughout the dissertation the idea that there is an optimal or preferred model for the representational rights of local government members. My research has demonstrated that RIGOs customize responses to differences in members' populations and the local government structures in place in a given region (#1 in Table 12); however, these are not the only two factors that can impact collective choice arrangements. Local governments' desire for a stake in the decisions of a RIGO also could shift as relationships among members strengthen or erode, federal and state incentives expand or contract, or as RIGOs undertake new issues, policies, and programs. With a growing compendium of governance documents from across the country (#5 in Table 12), the opportunity to develop proposals based on the experience of others in similar circumstances has never been easier. As RIGOs respond to these shifts, the scatterplots developed in Chapter 4 and 5 are one visually intuitive way to assess how different proposals would affect a region's local governments in total, rather than showing individually how each member would be affected.

Investigating the role large cities play within a RIGO (#2a in Table 12) is one lens through which we can better understand the strategies local government members (of all sizes) exercise to ensure their objectives are achieved. The prior academic literature largely has characterized center cities as having equal representational rights to their neighboring suburban and rural jurisdictions. My research shows those "one-member, one-vote" models are substantially less prevalent than has been acknowledged to date, especially in RIGOs with a city of more than 200,000 people. Furthermore, membership is not defined consistently both within

and across RIGOs (and other similar bodies); the combination of counties, municipalities, and multijurisdictional members varies substantially. Why, when, and how the principal city (or cities) in a region choose to collaborate with their fellow local governments and the professional staff of a RIGO can shed important light about how to build a thriving region (either competitively or cooperatively). While the focus in one component of the dissertation has been about cities of 200,000 people or more, some quantitative indications suggest the ratio of population between the center city (or cities) to other members may be more important to the collective choice arrangements than the overall population⁵⁹.

The interactions among local government members are a product of the people who represent them; within RIGOs, these are primarily elected officials and appointed citizens (#4 in Table 12). The public administration literature has researched extensively how professional staff works across jurisdictions, but there are very few findings about the role elected officials play in working collaboratively across boundaries (examples: Feiock, Lee, Park, & Lee, 2010; Gerber & Gibson, 2009; Matkin & Frederickson, 2009). We know even less about the role local government appointed citizens play on the boards of cross-boundary intergovernmental organization (see Dougherty & Miller in Miller, Nelles, Dougherty, & Rickabaugh, 2018). In the vein of Van de Ven's "engaged scholarship" (2007), this is a space where future research should be driven by the needs of practitioners. Elected officials, appointed citizens, municipal and county staff, and RIGO staff know better how their processes work; they can assist academics in

⁵⁹ As a hypothetical example, a three-member RIGO with populations of 500,000, 200,000, and 100,000 (total population: 900,000) probably has more similarities in collective choice arrangement to a three-member RIGO with populations of 50,000, 20,000, and 10,000 (total population: 90,000) than it does to a three-member RIGO with populations of 300,000 each (total population: 900,000).

finding the key decision points and stress points to better our understanding and the gaps where rigorous research can be most beneficial.

The work RIGOs do is in a unique space among the cooperative options available to local governments, but the relationships it builds have strong parallels with international organizations that can bring more rigorous research methods and practical research questions (#3 in Table 12). Both RIGOs and international organizations exist to serve their members and create collective gains from cooperation and coordinating. However, both classes of organizations are constrained also by their government members' desire for autonomy and internal control. The international organizations literature has a deep understanding of how trust is built among members, in particular when those members have inequalities in size (of population, of economies, etc.). This literature has evaluated the customs and norms developed to ensure reciprocation and how collective choice arrangements evolve to meet member needs. Most practically, this body of research has connected these questions to why these forms of collaboration meet their members' objectives, lose relevance, or even dissolve. The findings of international organizations scholarship can be examined to develop best practices to assist RIGOs in meeting the goals their local government members seek to achieve. These findings will not be a turnkey perfect fit; there are certainly limitations to the parallels.

Finally, this dissertation has actively separated the collective choice arrangements of a RIGO from the roles that local, state and federal governments have granted the RIGO (#2b in Table 12). This is likely to be the largest difference between international organizations and RIGOs. The state and federal government has granted the authority to RIGOs to pursue various activities, provided resources to incentivize cooperation on certain activities, and in some cases put constraints on collective choice arrangements. However, the portfolio of policies a RIGO

undertakes is not entirely derived from higher levels of government. As a result of local government initiatives, RIGOs take on regional challenges like rural broadband, climate resilience planning, and eliminating food deserts. My dissertation is an initial step in redefining this distinction; this research works towards building new perceptions that (1) RIGOs take on policy challenges as a result of local government initiative, not just through state or federal mandate, (2) a RIGO's policy portfolio is distinct from its collective choice arrangements, but that (3) the collective choice arrangements and policy portfolios can affect one another.

6.2 Future Research Agenda

The five major categories of contributions outlined in Table 12 open up promising lines of research to be explored going forward. In this section, I focus on two potential future avenues that build on existing work and apply these findings. First, I describe how the two measures of collective choice arrangements developed in this dissertation can be used as a dependent variable to understand how they are affected by the diffusion of local governments within a region. I also suggest how these measures can be applied, as independent variables, to better understand how projects and funding are distributed within a region. The second potential avenue investigates the decision-making process beyond the formal governance documents and evaluating the informal norms, customs, and strategies local governments and RIGO staff use to build trust, negotiate proposals, and ensure their objectives are achieved.

The Institutional Membership Score (IMS) and Population Proportionality Score (PPS) demonstrated earlier indicate substantial variation in the collective choice arrangements of RIGOs, but how this variation correlates as an independent or dependent variable has yet to be

explored. It seems logical that the complexity of local governments throughout a given region would correlate to the results of the RIGO's collective choice arrangements; however this has not yet been tested. Dougherty & Miller (in Miller et al., 2018) have developed a measure of this complexity by RIGO boundaries, but these factors have not yet been considered together. Gerber and Gibson (2009) and Nelson et al. (2003) have both tried to tie the limited governance information available of Metropolitan Planning Organizations at the time to Transportation Improvement Program reports to understand if these collective choice arrangements contribute to certain outcomes. These studies can be improved upon with a large compendium of governance documents and expanded to include other federal or state roles RIGOs pursue where financial and project reporting is consistent, such as Economic Development Districts. Identifying which collective choice arrangements correlate strongly to more growth-focused outcomes, urban-focused outcomes, or equity-focused outcomes could give RIGOs new tools to move in their desired direction.

However, even findings that show correlations between collective choice arrangements and outcomes would only unpack some of the black box; understanding how RIGO decision-making occurs requires going beyond the formal governance documents. Three highly inter-related aspects of this process build off this research most directly: the perceptions of representatives, the informal norms of the organization, and the underlying administrative structures. Research is scarce about the motivations of elected officials and citizen representatives and how they view their roles on RIGO boards (Matkin & Frederickson, 1999). Identifying what informs representatives' decision-making processes and how the negotiations among members (among the elected officials or the professional staff of the local governments) occur are both crucial to understanding the policy decisions the RIGO makes. The international

organizations literature has begun exploring how norms, customs, and informal governance strategies affect the policy outcomes beyond the collective choice arrangements (Dreher et al., 2009; Stone, 2013; Strand & Tuman, 2012). In addition, that field has looked extensively at how members delegate to professional staff in international organizations using a principal-agent model affected by formal governance documents and informal norms and customs (Cortell & Peterson, 2006; Hawkins, Darren G. Lake, David A., Nielson, Daniel L. and Tierney, 2006; Hawkins & Jacoby, 2006; Lyne, Nielson, & Tierney, 2006).

The international organizations theories can be tested within RIGOs to understand these interactions, but the benefits can be reciprocal. I have made the case for the parallels between international organizations and RIGOs throughout the dissertation, but only from the RIGO's perspective. There may be instances where RIGOs can be a large-n proxy to test interactions among members untestable with a limited number of highly specialized international organizations. The formal collective choice arrangements matter in setting a foundation for these norms and customs to develop, but the decision-making process is much more complex than the governance documents alone.

6.3 Conclusion

Regional Intergovernmental Organizations occupy a particularly rare place in the American political landscape in 2018. RIGOs are a forum where the urban, suburban, and rural elected officials meet on a regular basis out of the spotlight to work together. These elected officials represent incorporated places with names, not gerrymandered districts that change

because of Census results and political whims. These incorporated places have histories and cultures that inform the futures their citizens want for their neighborhood and the larger region of which they are a part. Leaders from all these varied places collaborate to develop programs to improve their region, and make them a reality. It may not always be easy for these leaders to find common ground, but nevertheless, they often do.

So frequently these days, the conversation turns towards how divided America is or how coarse the debate has become; no one silver bullet exists to solve a problem that complex. However, RIGOs are a space where the elected leaders of our country are bridging those divides and taking action collectively. The trust necessary to take that action collectively is predicated on agreeing to rules, both formal and informal, and sticking by those rules even when the vote goes against your interest. Understanding the governance of an organization is not just learning the rules for their own sake or for advantage; it is learning a bit more about how Reno sits down with ranchers on the Nevada frontier or how Asheville can share with North Carolina tobacco farming communities. Perhaps there is something to be learned here that can be applied in other political forums.

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